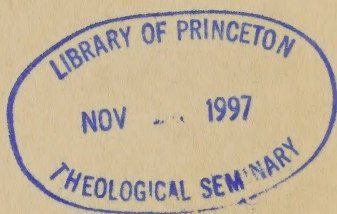


# SKID ROW STOPGAP

Mel Larson



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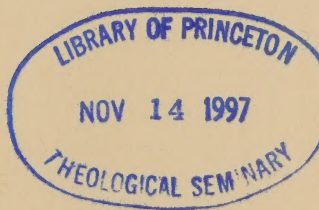
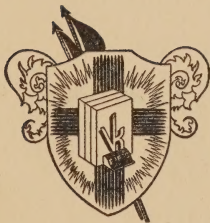


# SKID ROW STOPGAP

*The Memphis Story*

by

MEL LARSON



*Van Kampen Press*

WHEATON, ILL.

*Skid Row Stopgap*  
Copyright, 1950, by  
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Dedicated to  
Jimmy Stroud  
and through him  
to the men on  
Skid Row Boulevard



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## FOREWORD

SOME YEARS ago I had the joy of being in the home of Jimmy Stroud in the Charleston Union Mission, Charleston, West Virginia, being for a few days the beneficiary of the gracious hospitality bestowed by him and his lovely wife.

Later, when Jimmy came to Memphis — believing strongly that it was the will of God for him to do so — I had the honor to become his pastor, welcoming him and the gracious little woman whom God gave him for a life companion, into the membership of the Bellevue Baptist Church.

It gives me joy to say that this little book, "Skid Row Stopgap," records some great things which God has done in His use of Jimmy Stroud and in the salvation of the lost through his work in the Memphis Union Mission. Greatly can we rejoice in the man whose life weighs much on God's scales, measures much by God's measuring rod of service, and shines brightly in the light of God's commandments. With a spiritual enthusiasm which is constantly evident, with a determination which is constantly defiant of opposition, with a loyalty to the Word of God which cannot be denied, with a sweetness of spirit which is contagious, with a frankness and openness which is almost boyish yet honest, Jimmy Stroud works among us. Claiming that he may make some mistakes, yet knowing that the biggest mistake a man can ever make is to reject Jesus Christ as Saviour and refuse Him as Lord of his life, Jimmy goes on his way with unwavering faith — giving evidence daily of the presence of the invisible companion, Christ.

In "Skid Row Stopgap," we see how the heaven of salvation has come to some on earth in Memphis. I pray that God will bless him in all ways—and always.

ROBERT G. LEE.

*Pastor, Bellevue Baptist Church  
Memphis, Tennessee*



## PREFACE

The years 1949 and 1950 saw the secular and religious press of the United States turn their illuminating typewriters and cameras on the plight of the thousands of men on Skid Row boulevard. In city after city it was found that men who have become derelicts on the sea of life are treated often as though they were but mere dogs. In our fast-moving, materialistic life, not too many people have paused to give a helping hand to these men — and women — who have somewhere along the line lost the peg on which to hang a useful life.

The journalistic spotlight is focussed in many instances on the work done by rescue missions. We thank God that journalists have been able to see with their own eyes what is being done by these right arms of the church. They have come to realize the sincerity and the compassionate love which rescue missions have for the man who is down and out.

It seems appropriate that this book, "Skid Row Stopgap," should be written at this time. It tells the story of what God has been able to do through a vibrant young man, Jimmy Stroud, in some four years in the city of Memphis, Tennessee. The things which Robert G. Lee wrote of Jimmy in his preface to the book are so strikingly true once you get into the work of the Mission and see its head and founder at work. At the core of it all is a love for the man who shuffles up the street, casting furtive looks around, wondering if anyone is watching him, pausing for perhaps 10 to 15 minutes in front of the Mission before he slips into the chapel for the evening service.

There is nothing artificial about Jimmy Stroud or the Memphis Union Mission. We trust there is nothing artificial in this book telling of its amazing ministry in thirty different ways. We would that every reader might have the privilege

that has been ours of talking to some of the converts and hearing from their own lips what Jesus Christ has done for them. Truly, old things have passed away; old things are become new. We have seen as never before the power of God to change a man's life.

# 1

## WHAT GOES ON HERE!

YOU STOOD there in front of the court house in Memphis, Tennessee, looking up at four statues. Three of them looked back at you. The fourth was blind.

Authority — strong and young.

Wisdom — the old man's head is bowed, a cane in his hand.

Justice — those eyes are covered up.

Liberty — one hand on the chest, the other by the side.

Over here, to your left, was the police station. By its side, the central fire station. As you walked through the city you saw fine hotels, excellent stores, many good manufacturing plants. You met people and were impressed by the ambition and drive of the youthful and younger businessmen; you sensed at the same time the solidity of older businessmen who in time's record book were entering the final third of their lives.

You couldn't help but sense the bustle in this city which was just 100 years old in 1949, a city which now covers 116 square miles and has some 355,000 people living within its limits. The historical days of the past, when Tennessee found itself second only to Virginia as the most embattled state in the war between the states, have merged with the setting of new frontiers and the achieving of new goals.

The natural partner of a fine downtown district was found as you traveled through the residential areas. Lovely homes were seen on every side. Parks and playgrounds dotted the city. The airport hummed with activity. Train and bus terminals were beehives of business as people came and went at all hours of the day and night. Churches, large and small,



were found in all parts of the city. The mighty Mississippi flowed its quiet, majestic way toward the Gulf of Mexico.

People appeared well dressed. Young men in sailor uniforms filtered through the crowds, coming from a nearby naval base.

Memphis is normal in many ways along the uplifting and pleasant ways of thinking. But it is normal too, when your eyes and steps take you into sections of the city which are not too inviting. In those often-forgotten and neglected areas you find people who have been by-passed by the world, eking out an existence. Many reasons exist for their being there. As often as not it can be traced back to sin of one sort or another.

Memphis has two such areas, one on the north side of the city, the other on the south. You find the bargain stores, novelty stores, liquor stores, cafes with window signs of "One meat and three vegs. 30c" in crudely drawn letters, spaghetti emporiums, billiard halls, gents' furnishings, "wholesale to consumer" outlets, open food markets.

You pause at a book store, and these titles greet your eye from the window display: Shakespeare; Out of the Night; Esar's Joke Dictionary; Sex Facts for Women; Palmistry Guides; Webster's Dictionary; Emily Post on Etiquette; Bites; Don't Be Afraid; Memphis Bragabouts; Murder, by Experts.

Strangely, your eye also catches the following: New Dictionary of Baptist Churches; In His Steps; Baptist Hymnal; Arnold's Commentary; Peloubet's Select Notes; Barrabas; Faith of our Fathers.

But nearby you see another batch which includes: New Coin Tricks; The Art of Boxing; The Eighteen Absent Years of Jesus Christ; The Babe Ruth Story; Your Income Tax.

The folk you meet on the street often fit the neighborhood. Here's a man all banged up, a large patch on his nose. Up the street you watch a brawl being broken up by policemen. Garbage pushers make their way along the streets and

through the alleys. Many of the people you meet are Negro. Wandering sailor lads move in and out of the section, some of them looking for things they know their mothers wouldn't approve of.

Along comes a gray-haired lady, a typical grandmother. A man stops alongside you, moving his hands up and down, up and down, but not saying a word. Here comes another, talking out loud to himself as he hurries along. Here's a middle-aged lady, cigarette in hand, coughing in a tubercular sort of way. And a man with a bag full of old magazines.

Fragments of floating conversation stick in your mind. Two men with no apparent goal in sight stop to talk, and you hear, "Where you going?"

"Crazy."

Along comes a family — man, wife, grandmother, plus four children. Another man stops the father, bends over and tickles one of the children under the chin, and says,

"He your dad? Why, he's a no good . . . . ."

It is not dark, but drunken men occasionally wobble by you. Others have that look of "I'm holding my own, buddy, and I don't need help from you or anyone else to stand up."

Someone tells you about some of the homes in the area. The bed in one of the rooms is in the middle of the floor. Boxes are seen in the corners and along the walls. "Why?" you ask. The reply comes,

"Oh, the rats come in and bite my children so I use the boxes to try and keep them out and I move the bed as far away as possible."

A barefooted little tot comes walking down the street in the cold of winter. She has slipped away from her mother. Someone returns her to her home, or the single room which she and eight others call home. Eight people living in one room!

You are told that the man who is just preparing to leave the room is not the father of any of the children.

Back on the street, a man with red, swimming eyes says to your companion,

"Where have I been? I've been to Miami, and I've been drunk ever since I left here."

You can't help but wonder, "Is there any hope for these people? Can they be reached by *anyone*? Can their lives be straightened out? Is anything being done in their behalf. *Can* anything be done?"

Then it is that we let Jimmy Stroud take us around the corner on Poplar street in Memphis, a half block off Main street, and show us . . . the MEMPHIS UNION MISSION.

But, is this a mission hall?

This building is sparkling new. Two half-circle archways set off the front doors. Large, open windows give passersby opportunity to look in and see what is going on, not as you see shrouded tavern windows. It is spotlessly clean. The very atmosphere of the place gives you a "lift." You hear Jimmy Stroud say,

"See that drunk looking in the window? He's got something fine in him. We want to bring out that fineness. One way we do it is by keeping our place spic and span and up to date."

A phone rings and a man answers. The first part of what he says makes sense,

"This is the Memphis Union Mission."

But then he recites a Bible verse from a large Bible open before him and follows with the correct time!

"That's our telephone ministry," Jimmy explains. "We have three lines coming in for nothing but calls from people wanting the correct time, or wanting to be awakened in the morning. Each time they call, or we call them, they get a Bible verse."

You move over into an auditorium painted an attractive invigorating color. Phrases of songs dot the walls. You keep asking questions, and the answers amaze you. You start to



make a little list of ways in which the Memphis Union Mission is seeking to win people to Christ and steer them heavenward. You add them up, and find . . . thirty different ways!

"Sid Allen? Glad to meet you."

He's the son of a Presbyterian pastor, you are told, who came back to the Lord at the mission in 1947. Now he handles the telephone ministry as well as the registration of the men.

On Saturday night you go to a Youth for Christ rally. On Monday night you go to a Bible Study class followed by a fellowship time when the young people sing, give their testimonies, have refreshments and become better acquainted.

Each morning at 6:05 o'clock you're at WREC radio station. Sunday morning you may cross a bridge to go to Mud Island or travel to the Penal Farm. Or visit someone at the tuberculosis sanitarium. Any noon hour you hear from the roof of the Mission a loudspeaker playing, "Sweet Hour of Prayer." Down in the Mission hall you kneel with the Mission staff and others who come in.

One noon you get up from your knees at that noon prayer time and see a pool of tears where a lady who had slipped in from off the street had knelt . . . to accept Christ as her Saviour!

But this is not the place to describe in detail the work of the Memphis Union Mission or director Jimmy Stroud. This is but a window through which we see what God is doing in Memphis Skid Row. Your heart will be stirred to its deepest depth by what God has done — and is doing each day — through the consecrated men and women of God who labor ceaselessly in behalf of people young and old who stray from the normal paths of life and find themselves in desperate need of physical, mental and spiritual help.

The right arm of the church in downtown Memphis lives up to the sign alongside its main entrance,

IF YOU DO NOT HAVE A FRIEND  
IN THE WORLD,  
YOU CAN FIND ONE HERE.  
COME IN.

THE MEMPHIS UNION MISSION.

Since its birth in 1945, the Memphis Union Mission has startled Memphians and Christians across the country by its amazing progress and accomplishments for Christ. Not a few people have labeled it, "The Miracle of Memphis."

Anyone who has in any way had contact with it will agree that it represents "Christianity Down to Earth."

Walk with us as we delve into Memphis' Skid Row stopgap.

## THE MAN BEHIND THE MACHINE

JIMMY STROUD? The people who work with this flaming firebrand of gospel energy at the Memphis Union Mission say of him,

“A little man doing a big job. . . . Hurdling the stairs like a ‘red cap’ at the Union Station. . . . Driving his Buick like Jehu. . . . Calling upon you for a testimony at the least expected time. . . . Enthusiastic when you least expect it and seemingly cool when you think you have a red hot idea.

“Big hats and pretty ties. . . . Extremely sincere about a tremendous burden for Memphis. . . . Driving home a point, ending with a big smile and saying, ‘Aint it wonderful.’”

A man who once was wandering the streets in a drunken haze day after day for many months, but who found Christ at the Mission, says of the man who led him to God,

“Jimmy could pass right by you, look you straight in the eye and never notice you as his mind soars ‘Above the Clouds.’ At another time, he can see you a half block away and come toward you with his hand stuck out for a real handshake and a warm friendly smile.”

Could you walk into Jimmy’s office in the Memphis Union Mission you might find him dictating letters with his hat on, or talking to someone about his soul. Someone said of him that he doesn’t have time to take his hat off on some occasions. He is a driving bundle of human energy, constantly on the go for Christ as he keeps this great Mission humming and moving forward as one of the key religious organizations of Memphis.

His entire philosophy of living winds around the thought, "God and one make a majority." Alongside it he has placed another principle which could apply to all Christians as well as Christian workers, "If you can't live what you preach, don't preach it." There is nothing insincere in the makeup of Jimmy Stroud as he serves Christ as the church's right arm in reaching downtrodden men and women on Skid Row boulevard.

Jimmy's background has prepared him well for the job he is doing. He was born in Lee, Florida, on June 17, 1915, the son of a rural mail carrier and his godly wife. It was said of Jimmy's dad, "If Frank Stroud said it, it's true."

Highly respected in the area, he wanted a son to follow in his footsteps.

But Jimmy wasn't the "following kind." As he grew up and went into high school at the county seat in Madison, he lived the kind of a life which often grieved his parents. The pool hall became his hangout when he wasn't playing half-back on the football team or taking charge of the baseball squad. At 15 he tasted whiskey for the first time and was an expert pool player. By 16 he was a drunk! Many school hours were wasted as he played truant to lounge around the billiard hall.

Mom and Dad Stroud would be told that weekends were to be spent on fishing trips or football games. Instead, Jimmy and the rest of the gang went on drunken sprees. When excuses ran out as to why he didn't come home weekends, Jimmy would tell his parents that he preferred to stay in town with friends rather than come home late at night.

But it was not long before he became more bold in his sinful living. Late at night he would slip into the house, trusting that his parents were asleep. They usually were, but one night his mother was still awake. It was 1:30 o'clock when he walked into the house under the influence of liquor. As he passed by her room, he looked in from the hall and saw her kneeling in prayer by her bed.



Not a word passed between mother and son as he went on his way to his room. But when she came to waken Jimmy the next morning, he saw for the first time the face of a mother whose heart was heavy for the salvation of her only boy.

No words of reproach or punishment ever came from her lips. Instead, she prayed the more.

Jimmy had his share of ambition, but not along spiritual lines. His father had saved from his modest income enough money to send Jimmy through osteopathy training. His mother was more interested in his first becoming a Christian, than in acquiring his training. The three agreed that a year of college work would be beneficial before osteopathy training. When the choice of college came up, Mrs. Stroud had her way and Jimmy was enrolled at Asbury college in Wilmore, Kentucky. She was well acquainted with the school and it was her hope and prayer that Jimmy might become a Christian through the influence of the professors, staff or students.

Jimmy left home in September, 1934. As he stood on the little country depot platform at Lee, Florida, with his parents and his sister, he had unusual thoughts running through his mind. He cared not where he was to get his training. The two things which concerned him were of little significance when compared to the importance of the occasion. He was thinking of seeing his first mountain out of the train window and of getting into the middle of a snowstorm!

The seriousness of the hour went right past him. But little did he realize the implications which were to follow from his mother's God-guided decision that he should go to Asbury College.

The religious atmosphere and life at Asbury, however, made no dent on Jimmy Stroud. Three weeks after he arrived he met Eddie Withrow. Eddie was the son of Pat Withrow, founder and director of the world-known Union Mission at Charleston, West Virginia. They roomed together

and became as intimate as brothers. They were two of a kind and persisted in their fun-filled life right straight through a revival-charged school year. Jimmy remained as "ornery" as ever. Many other freshmen sent to the school by praying parents became Christians. But not Jimmy Stroud and Eddie Withrow. They sailed serenely along in their sinful ways.

When classes were over, Jimmy accepted Eddie's invitation to spend the summer in Charleston. He had nothing else to do and decided to go there as well as anywhere else. He reasoned that if Eddie's dad was anything like Eddie, he would have a good time.

Lowell Thomas, famed radio newscaster, once described Pat Withrow as follows on one of his radio programs:

"I've known Pat Withrow for many years. He is one of the most picturesque characters of our day, a dynamic, irrepressible and indomitable spirit who deserves the cooperation of everyone."

Pat Withrow was to have a tremendous influence on Jimmy Stroud. That something called friendship "clicked" when first Eddie said to Jimmy, "Meet my dad." Jimmy knew that he was real. After a few days of seeing him in action around his mission, he was more convinced than ever of it.

One day in 1907 Pat Withrow was riding on a streetcar in Charleston. He was not the most respected man in the community. In his own mind he felt that he had committed just about every sin possible. A few months before he had burned his home to collect the insurance. He was now working as a bartender as he waited trial on the arson charge which meant a term of five to eighteen years if he was convicted.

As he sat in the car, a young Methodist preacher who only recently had come to the city sat down alongside him and said, not caring who might hear,

"I'm a new Methodist pastor here in Charleston, and I'd like to have you come and visit my church."

Surprised, Withrow could only say,

"Mister, you can't be talking to me. I haven't been to church since I was a little boy.

The minister told him that that made no difference and again invited him to the church. Withrow insisted again that the minister didn't mean him. The pastor then said,

"Your name is Withrow, isn't it?"

Pat answered,

"Yes, my name is Withrow, but there are hundreds of Withrows in Kanawah Valley. You're looking for someone else."

The young preacher moved a bit closer to this bartender whose heart was heavy with sin and condemnation and said,

"But your name is *Pat* Withrow, isn't it?"

Wondering, Withrow replied,

"Yes, my name is Pat Withrow."

With tears in his eyes, the minister went on,

"You are the one."

Silence followed. God apparently was using this young pastor at that very moment. Withrow could not understand why he or anyone else should be interested in him, an undesirable bartender. Suddenly he turned to the minister and said,

"Why do you want me to come to your church?"

When the preacher told him that it was only because of a love for his soul, Withrow went on,

"If you care for me, you are the only person in the world who does. My own father has written me three notes telling me not to speak to him if I meet him on the street. I'm the black sheep of our family. And here you go and tell me that you love me."

"Withrow," the parson replied, "I know of someone else who also loves you."

"And who can that be?"

"Jesus loves you, Withrow."

The Holy Spirit had softened the heart of Pat Withrow. He said, quietly,

"If you love me and Jesus loves me, I'm coming to your church on Sunday."

The following Sunday Pat Withrow gave his heart to Christ in that Methodist church in Charleston. Three years later he resigned a top position with the telephone company and with a few businessmen, a capital of \$100 and a promised salary of \$50 a month, organized the Union Mission. Today that Mission is considered the largest rescue mission in the world, having \$750,000 in assets, 17 departments and an average of 50 paid workers on the payroll.

Through "Brother Pat" and the mission, Jimmy Stroud saw Christianity at work. He saw and heard men and women testify to the regenerating power of Christ as Saviour and Redeemer. Jimmy was impressed by their happiness and sincerity. Their joy was real, their contentment was deep.

Jimmy worked around the mission doing odd jobs. However, he was still outside the sphere of his mother's prayers and as often as not spent his nights drinking and at the dance halls. Gradually the atmosphere of the mission began to seep into him. He came to think more and more of his own future. It was bleak and barren when compared to the happiness found in those turning to Christ at the mission. By the morning of September 14, 1935, he was desperately concerned. He was miserable, as if being arrested by some unseen officer of the law. He cried, but could not explain his tears. He left his job for a moment and went to his room.

At about 10:30 in the morning as he sat alone in his room, the Spirit of God came close and whispered into his ear that he needed his mother's Christ and that He alone could satisfy the hunger that had arisen so suddenly. He ran to Pat Withrow's office. When Pat saw his tear-filled eyes, he immediately asked what was wrong. Jimmy blurted out,



"I want to be a Christian. I want to know my mother's Jesus!"

Wise, experienced Pat Withrow slipped an arm around his shoulder and said,

"Jimmy, let's get on our knees and pray."

That was it.

Withrow led Jimmy to a personal faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. It gave Jimmy the greatest thrill he ever had experienced. He testified years later,

"I was saved, and I knew it. It's hard to tell of the joy in the heart when Christ comes in. I felt good all over. My cares rolled away and I was 'Above the Clouds.'"

Jimmy was 800 miles from home when God used Pat Withrow to answer a mother's prayers. He was so happy about it that he sent her a telegram. Back came an immediate reply,

"I am not surprised, but terribly happy. Praise God. Letter follows."

Later when Mrs. Stroud visited the mission she asked to be taken to the place where Jimmy had knelt to be converted. With tears flowing from her own eyes she knelt in the same spot and thanked God for answering her prayers of many years.

But what now? Back to school?

Jimmy experienced immediately a burning desire to remain in mission work, so he stayed out of school and continued to work at the mission. He was paid \$20.00 a month, plus room and board. Later this was increased to \$30.00 a month.

Those months and years brought Jimmy the hardest struggle he ever has faced. It involved whether or not to stay in mission work. He travelled some as songleader and soloist for Dr. R. B. Lakin. In 1942 he was called back to Charleston as assistant superintendent. The time had come for thorough schooling in the operation of a rescue mission.

The next three years gave Jimmy a definite understanding of the process.

How he experienced the power of God in those days! There would be no space here to tell of even a small fraction of them. On New Year's Eve, 1942, Jimmy was in the office with Withrow when a dissipated, bleary-eyed man walked in. He said abruptly,

"I have just left my family up the river, after beating up my wife. I know God has sent me here in answer to my sister's prayers. I want to get right with God—I need Him!"

The three men knelt in the office. When Del got up from his knees, he was a new creature in Christ Jesus. His frightened family was overjoyed to hear the news, but, more important, to see the difference. A month later they sat in the front row of the mission chapel while Del preached a sermon!

One day Jimmy was asked to conduct the funeral of a 13-month old baby girl. On arriving at the home he found both the mother and the father on the verge of nervous collapse. They screamed. They wept. Their bodies were wracked with agony. They were living examples of the truth that there is no hope or comfort apart from Jesus.

A few weeks later Jimmy was called to a funeral parlor where lay the bodies of a Rev. and Mrs. Swann, both instantly killed in an auto wreck. Three children were left behind, including a son, Charles, in the armed forces. These children knew Christ, knew that He had power over death. There were quiet tears; the sweet comfort of Christ ruled the hour. Charlie gently touched the father and mother on the cheek and said,

"Bye, until tomorrow."

Another time Jimmy was called to the death bed of a devout layman. He came to give comfort, but instead learned a lesson in soul winning. That consecrated businessman used his last earthly breath in an attempt to win his doctor to Christ. He gasped to him,

"Doctor, the most important thing I ever did in all my life was to make preparation for this hour of death by accepting Jesus Christ as my Saviour. I would like so much to have you accept Him, too, doctor. He's your only hope. Doctor, Jesus is real!"

Jimmy thoroughly enjoyed his work at Charleston. Yet he felt that God was preparing him for work in another city. Part of that preparation, too, came in the form of a young lady named Dortha Bailey, who became Mrs. James Stroud on June 17, 1941 (Jimmy's birthday). Dortha has been a tremendous help to Jimmy in all of his work. "Three little terrors," as they are called, have come to round out the Stroud home life—James Andrew, Thomas Ramar and Paul Markham.

Other interesting sidelights also proved a blessing. Heroic Capt. Colin P. Kelly of World War II was from Jimmy's home town in Florida. When the Four Freedoms Memorial to Capt. Kelly was dedicated on June 14, 1944, Jimmy led the great throng in singing "Faith of Our Fathers."

Moving time seemed to be coming toward the end of 1944. Greenville, South Carolina, businessmen and pastors corresponded with Jimmy about coming there to start a mission. While going there to look into the situation, he also was able to complete another important phase of his Christian experience when the Salem Baptist Church at Winston-Salem, North Carolina, fulfilled its desire to ordain Jimmy for the Christian ministry. Dr. Charles H. Stevens, pastor there at the time, conducted the ordination.

Jimmy spent a number of days in Greenville discussing the situation. He went back again in February, 1945, for further discussions with the committee members. Somehow he felt that God would not have him go at that time to Greenville. Just before he had boarded the train for Greenville, Pat Withrow had read to him a letter from a businessman in Memphis, Tennessee, asking for help in getting a rescue

mission started in his city. That letter had stuck in Jimmy's mind all during the discussions at Greenville.

Back in Charleston, Withrow and Jimmy talked over the Memphis letter. Should he go? Was God leading that way? Was Memphis the place where Jimmy was to put into practice the many things he had learned in Charleston under Withrow?

In April, 1945, a train coming into Memphis had as one of its passengers a young man named Jimmy Stroud. In his brief case was a letter from a man named T. Walker Lewis, president of the Lewis Supply Company.

Thus begins our miracle of Memphis, a Skid Row stopgap.



## FROM NOTHING TO SOMETHING

T. WALKER LEWIS sat in his office in Memphis on April 6, 1945, perhaps wondering, as executives sometimes do, what the day might bring forth. His Lewis Nut and Bolt Company was a thriving concern. He also had his hand in other successful ventures. Memphis knew him as a Christian layman active in church work as well as civic enterprises.

He had been born on a small, poor farm in the foothills of the Blue Ridge mountains in Virginia. Family prayer was the order of the day in the devout Christian home into which he was born. Church-going started when he was five, and he has been going to Sunday school ever since. At 14 he was baptized and confirmed in the Episcopal church by the bishop of Virginia. The young lady who became his wife was an active Presbyterian, and Lewis later became active in its programs.

But it was not until an evangelists' convention in Memphis' Ellis Auditorium in 1934 that he came to a realization of Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour. It happened at a Sunday afternoon service. Ever since that day he has served Christ with renewed consecration and devotion.

To T. Walker Lewis, Memphis needed a citywide mission work. He knew what had been done in other cities and through that God stirred his heart to action. History told him of Jerry McAuley's 316 Water street mission in New York City and how that river thief who had been sentenced to 15 years in Sing Sing at the age of 19 had been used of God to start a revival within those walls. Pardoned in 1864, he had fallen back into sin a number of times, but finally

was used of God to start the mission which has reclaimed thousands of men from destruction.

He thought of Chicago's Pacific Garden Mission, of Philadelphia's "Sunday Breakfast." He knew with a burdened heart the truth of what a British journalist wrote after visiting American slums when he titled his article, "I Spent Last Saturday Night in Hell."

Memphis, smaller though it was than Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, or others, had its share of bums, hoboes or migratory workers. It, too, had its "city within a city," where police cars pick up fallen forms even as garbage men pick up garbage. It was the area of the meanest mile, the dead end street, the street of forgotten men where panhandling is preferred to stealing, where liquor is cheaper than poison but just about as potent.

T. Walker Lewis could see that the people and most of the churches had moved to the outskirts of the city. As they moved out, other people moved in. But as the churches moved out, other churches did not move in. So developed a group of people with no churches to provide for them.

He knew what rescue mission meetings were like and how testimony meetings had warmed his own soul time and time again. He knew that if a rescue mission sermon was not good, the men would simply go to sleep. He thought of men he knew as superintendents. All were rugged individualists. None were modernists, theologically speaking. Few, perhaps, had seminary training. He perhaps may even have smiled in thinking of Mel Trotter's seven-minute ordination examination. When that great mission worker was asked by one of the committee members,

"Are you an Armenian or a Calvinist?" he replied,  
"My father was Irish!"

Why was he interested in missions? Why did he wonder about the man coming to his office that day from Charleston, West Virginia? It was because of a love for God, a love for

souls and the thrill in seeing lives changed under the power of God. What greater thrill could there be, he may have pondered, at seeing outcasts at whom dogs would not even bark become new men through the power of the Gospel.

The door of his office opened. Jimmy Stroud walked in.

Lewis had never seen him before. He took one look at him, slapped his hand on his desk, and exclaimed,

"My prayers are answered! You're the man!"

Jimmy and Lewis had a truly wonderful conference that morning. Plan after plan unfolded. Their thoughts and prayers merged. That noon Lewis was presiding at a YMCA membership luncheon where about 30 men were present. At the close of the meeting he said,

"Gentlemen, it has been on my heart for several years that we have in Memphis a real interdenominational rescue mission. I have prayed earnestly about it. I believe that my prayers have now been answered. The young man I am now to introduce arrived in Memphis this morning, coming to us from one of the largest missions in the world and with the recommendation of a man we all know and love, Pat Withrow. I would like to meet afterwards in an adjoining room every man who is interested in seeing Memphis have this type of work for the purpose of winning the lost and of helping these men not able to help themselves."

Seventeen men stayed. They were the cream of the business and professional group of the city. Jimmy told them of the work in Charleston and how he had dedicated his life to mission work. For no other reason, he explained, was he in Memphis that day. As he spoke he could sense that the men were with him, so without any previous arrangement of any kind with Lewis or anyone else, he asked,

"Gentlemen, everyone in favor of my acting as chairman of this meeting, let it be known by saying 'Aye.'"

The response was unanimous. Jimmy immediately opened the meeting for election of officers. Lewis was unanimously

elected president, Charles Andrews, vice-president, E. W. Sprague, secretary, and A. B. Davis, treasurer. The officers formed the executive committee which was authorized to appoint a directory board of 25 men to discuss future plans. Jimmy then announced,

"Gentlemen, a mission for Memphis has been born."

It had gone quickly, but God was in it. Those eighteen men—seventeen from Memphis, together with Jimmy—stood in a circle and joined in dedicating the endeavor to Christ. It was clearly evident that the group had been moved by the Spirit of God. The speed at which things moved was amazing. Only four hours elapsed between the time Jimmy arrived in town and the mission was formed! God must have worked in the hearts of men to prepare the way for the rapid action.

Each man present was asked to bring one other man with him to a meeting two days later to help build up the organization. So enthusiastic were they about the idea that they brought an average of more than two each! Fifty-seven men were present on Sunday, April 8, when after further discussion Jimmy officially was appointed superintendent, asked to name his own salary, and the name, Memphis Union Mission, approved. Jimmy immediately outlined a seven-point program:

1. Finding a suitable location within four blocks of the center of the city.
2. Holding services every night of the year.
3. Providing a place for men to sleep one night, or two, if necessary.
4. Providing a place to aid and shelter destitute girls.
5. Stressing jail and prison work so as to aid in reducing crime.
6. Originating a radio ministry from the Mission.
7. Sponsoring a Saturday night youth rally.

He imparted to the men the basic need of being genuinely sold on the idea of the Mission, the need of it, then allowing



God to enthuse them about it, praying for it, putting legs under those prayers and, finally, believing God to go out and do it.

He was sure that God had called him to Memphis. Someone described it later as "handpicked by God for the job." On May 5 he was back in Memphis with his family, ready and eager to go to work in building the Mission.

Housing conditions in Memphis were as bad as in any major city during the war. War industries, army camps and a military hospital caused the tightening up. Many good-meaning friends told Jimmy it was out of the question for them even to think of finding a place to live.

But, God was working. The day before he left Memphis to return to Charleston for his family, Jimmy was standing on the corner of Main and Madison, almost a complete stranger to Memphis and its people. As he stood there, a man stopped by and invited him to lunch. He had heard Jimmy, he said, as he taught Dr. Robert G. Lee's Bible class in the Bellevue Baptist church the Sunday before. His name, too, was Stroud—O. P. Stroud. Even more interesting, as far as Jimmy was concerned at the moment, was the fact that he was in the real estate business. He promised Jimmy that noon that he would find him a place to live when he got back and before the planned apartment in the Mission building would be ready. Jimmy's lunch tasted much better after getting that news.

Leaving Charleston, however, was not an easy thing to do. Jimmy and Dortha had made a host of friends. In Jimmy's pocket was a letter from one of the city's judges, telling of the appreciation of Jimmy's work in the courts in the city. In a way, it was like leaving home, for it was in Charleston that Jimmy had been "born again."

Until their furniture arrived, they stayed at the Hotel Gayoso in Memphis. Jimmy immediately called up O. P.

Stroud when they reached Memphis and, true to his word, he brought his car over to take Jimmy and Dortha to look at an apartment he had somehow managed to secure. As they drove along he kept apologizing over and over for the condition of the apartment. Jimmy and Dortha told him just as repeatedly that they would be well satisfied with anything just so they had a place to live. As Jimmy told him, "For anyone to apologize in such a situation would be to ask forgiveness for not being able to do the impossible."

But, they had as yet not seen the "apartment."

They walked through high weeds to reach the building from the back entrance. Up a stairway they went to an attic which had just been lined with beaverboard. A small bathroom provided the only running water. Dishwashing would have to be done in the small basin and cooking water drawn from the bathtub. An attic in summer hardly could be rated an ideal arrangement for a family of four, considering, too, the blistering hot days and humid nights of the Mississippi Valley area.

Jimmy looked at Dortha to get her reaction. Never was he more proud of her than when she registered not the least disappointment or displeasure. Jimmy told Stroud,

"God sent us here to Memphis, and here we'll stay. The devil isn't going to scare us out, even if it means living in a tent."

However, they never did move in. God had something else for them. The next afternoon a lady called O. P. Stroud and told him that she had just bought a new home and had learned that she could not leave her old home until the lease expired in three months.

And, she asked, did he know of anyone who would live in her house just until the first of September?

Jimmy, Dortha and family moved in! The home even had a fenced-in backyard where the children could play.

It was for exactly the period of time they needed. Logic? No, faith in God.

The first days and weeks in Memphis were tiring physically on Jimmy. Any new work requires setting up of many contacts. The Mission was no exception. People had to be made acquainted with the work. Churches and pastors had to be contacted. Businessmen were interviewed for advice and support. Press and radio details needed attention.

Each night Jimmy looked back on a thousand or so completed details. But he looked ahead to a similar day tomorrow. He had no one with whom to share his burden. He had no car to get around, and his newness to the city made him waste many hours in getting lost in the wrong end of town because he took the wrong bus.

He walked, and walked, and walked. He was on the go constantly. But he was happy. Happiness, however, didn't keep his feet from swelling up because of the walking he was forced to do. He bandaged his right foot, and kept on walking. He thought of an automobile a good deal, but prices were so high and good ones so scarce that such a purchase was impossible.

One day the pain became too much to bear. The devil, too, was tagging him all around town, giving him such thoughts as,

"Now, here you are, sick and almost ready to walk yourself to death. You had a good car furnished you in Charleston, with a nice place to live. Here you are in a new town and not over three or four people know you're even here. If you keep this up, you'll die before the Mission even opens."

Jimmy knew from experience that the best way to get rid of the devil is to pray. So he leaned up against the window of the Rhodes-Jennings Furniture Company on North Main street and simply asked God to help, praying.

"Lord, I know that I was sent here to Memphis by you.

I know that your Word says that if God be for us, who can be against us. If I die in the next few hours, I'll die trying to do my best and trusting you for the details."

He took on new strength, got started again, and nothing could stop him.

T. Walker Lewis called the next day, having in some way found out about Jimmy's acute transportation problem and his ebbing physical strength.

"Jimmy" he said, "Charlie Carter will be back in town on Monday and I'm going to have him take you down to see Mr. Horace Hull and we'll get you some kind of an automobile."

All Jimmy could say was,

"That sounds good to me."

But God had his own way of working out the problem. The night following the call from Mr. Lewis, a long distance call from Charleston informed Jimmy that the trust department of the Charleston National Bank had an automobile for him. A. J. Humphreys, a close friend of Jimmy's, had died three weeks previously at the age of 84. In a codicil to his will he bequeathed his beautiful Buick to Jimmy. So there Jimmy was, the owner of one thing he needed most urgently at the precise moment he needed it. Plus a far better car than he could have afforded to buy.

Jimmy later told this story and an old lady asked him,

"Mr. Stroud, do you mean to say that God caused that old man to die right at that particular time so that you could have an automobile?"

Jimmy replied,

"I didn't say that, but this one thing I know, Romans 8:28 is true and all things work together for good to them that love God."

A lawyer-friend prepared power-of-attorney papers and Jimmy's father-in-law in Charleston possessed the car for



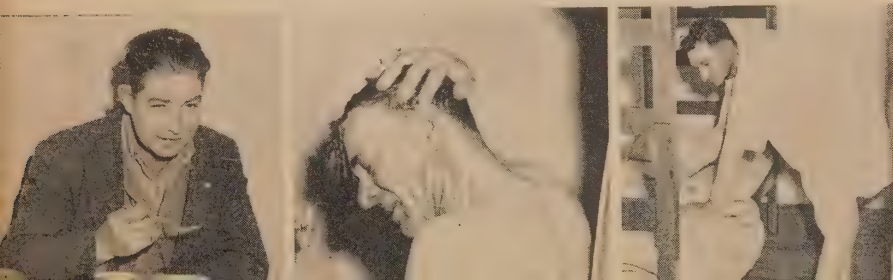


# *The Story in Pictures*

JIMMY STROUD, superintendent of Memphis Union Mission (referred to as MUM). The main unit of the Mission, pictured below, houses the chapel, offices, kitchen, dining room and men's dormitory.



Behind the scenes at MUM, left to right: A man being fed in the Mission kitchen; another under the shower; a third ready to hop into a clean bed.





Sid Allen giving out the Word of God with the correct time on the telephone ministry. People are also awakened in the morning with the Word of God.

Everett Harris, convert of MUM, is an artist, now a well-adjusted member of the Mission family.



him. To top it off, the Mission directors paid the inheritance tax as the final touch of friendliness.

In the first days in Memphis Jimmy did his work at the offices of the Interstate Realty company. Mr. Gilmer Richardson, owner of the firm, allowed Jimmy to use half of his desk, the phone and other conveniences. One by one the details started to be cleared up. The official opening date was set for June 17, 1945, only two months and eleven days after Jimmy had first set foot in Memphis. In addition to being the birthday of the Mission it would be Jimmy's birthday, his fourth wedding anniversary and the date of the arrival of his new car. His mother was coming from Florida for the opening. That Sunday happened to be Father's day, but Mrs. Stroud would be making the trip alone as Jimmy's dad had gone home to heaven in the spring of 1941.

Memphis newspapers ran a big story under the headline, "Outstanding Day in Unique Life." Elaborate plans were made for the inauguration. Ceremonies began with a dinner at the Hotel Peabody in honor of Mrs. Billy Sunday and Pat Withrow, who had come to Memphis to give the principal addresses. The guests then climbed into eight banner-draped buses and drove through the city to Ellis Auditorium, preceded by a police escort on horseback. When they arrived at the Auditorium they found 2100 people gathered for the first public presentation and official opening of the Memphis Union Mission. Fifty-nine pastors from co-operating churches were in the audience.

It was a memorable occasion. Spirited hymns were directed by Ben Carr. Eager Boy Scouts ushered the audience to their seats and furnished a color guard for the flags. The platform was filled with directors, ministers, business and professional men, and civic leaders. Dr. Robert G. Lee sat alongside Mrs. Sunday and Mr. Withrow. Dr. T. K. Young of the Idlewild Presbyterian Church gave the invocation; Edmund Orgill, president of the Memphis Chamber of Com-



merce and chairman of the Mission's finance committee, brought the introductory greeting. T. Walker Lewis reported on how God had answered prayer and how strongly reaffirmed was his own faith in the living Christ.

Dr. Lee then introduced Mrs. Sunday, who told in a dramatic way of her husband's conversion at the Pacific Garden Mission in Chicago while a member of a professional baseball team. This was the starting point of his spectacular career as an evangelist during which he led thousands of souls to Christ.

Jimmy then introduced Pat Withrow, the real "father" of the Mission. Withrow described rescue missions as "an adjunct of the church." Ministers can sleep at night, he said, with the assurance that the arm of the church is on duty downtown ministering to those in need of salvation.

Then he gave the audience an opportunity to invest financially in the new project. The *Memphis Commercial Appeal* reported the next day,

"Memphis never had so much fun in peeling off bills. Money rolled in like the tide."

The response was immediate, and enthusiastic. E. O. Mahaffey volunteered from the crowd, "\$1000." Men such as Lewis, Orgill, Richardson, C. L. Andrews, Bates Brown, A. G. Harrison and many others had made sizeable contributions in defraying the expenses incurred in getting the early work accomplished.

Mixing Irish humor with eloquent appeal, Withrow kept the great gathering in gales of laughter while the pledge cards and money rolled in.

When the gifts had all come in, a total of 8,946 had been received! (After the evening rally, the figure had gone past \$10,000). Jimmy closed the meeting with a short explanation of the purpose and exact nature of the work. The meeting that followed that evening went into details more thoroughly and the seven-point program was explained.

The day was a remarkable demonstration of civic and spiritual support for "the church in overalls downtown." It proved clearly that the city was enthusiastically behind the Mission and its plans.

Basically, the Mission is organized simply. All projects are subject to the Board of Directors. Execution of decisions is left in the hands of the superintendent. It is chartered by the state of Tennessee as a non-profit organization. It has no guarantors, but is kept going entirely by voluntary contributions as God challenges people to give.

God worked wonders again in the location of the Mission. For fifteen years, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas B. King had conducted the "Little Soul Winner Mission" at 200 N. Main Street. Meetings were held nightly in the small room, but it was not open during the day. God blessed the Kings in their work. When they heard about the proposed citywide mission, they told of how they had sought God's will as to their relationship to it. God told them both the same thing—to turn over all of the equipment they had, along with the lease on the building to the Memphis Union Mission.

So on June 18, 1945, a day after the opening, the Memphis Union Mission held its first service at 200 North Main Street. This served as a temporary building until the property around the corner at 107 Poplar Avenue was remodeled and equipped.

The building on Poplar Avenue was purchased for \$15,000. It is two blocks from the Mississippi river and about the same distance from one of the railroad stops. The building had been a saloon and gambling house, so it was the first thing to be "converted" in the Mission's ministry. Walker and Sons took over the remodeling job and Geo. Awsumb the architectural work. Plans were clear on one thing—to make it the finest rescue mission building in the country. No reasonable expense was spared in making this possible. Jimmy and the board of directors agreed that God's work demanded



the best. When the remodeling was completed, \$28,000 more had been spent.

This then is what you found on the inside of the mission which Mrs. Sunday has described as "the cleanest, most unique mission in the entire United States."

The first floor is devoted mainly to the beautiful chapel which seats 250 people. Alongside the chapel are the dining room, showers, and superintendent's office. The walls are painted in light colors, giving an atmosphere of cheer. The chapel walls were covered with the actual musical notes and words from such old favorites as "Jesus Saves," "Amazing Grace," "My Faith Looks Up to Thee," and many others.

A concrete floor replaced the wood floor. The Illinois Central railroad made and donated benches for the chapel.

On the second floor, forty-eight beds were installed. Two rooms were left vacant to allow for expansion, and now are in complete use. The apartment for Jimmy's family was in front on the second floor.

The outside of the building was finished with a neat red brick. The half-circle marquees covered the entrances to the two sides. A large Bible was placed in the front window, with a new page turned each day. Hundreds of people pause to read it daily as three bus lines stop right in front of the mission.

The very appearance of the building did something to the neighborhood. The buildings in this section of town are not of the best; immediately across from the Mission is a building which has the second and third floors vacant and the windows all knocked out. It is also located in a part of the city which has its share of the 160 retail liquor stores in Memphis. It is a refreshing sight indeed to turn off Main Street onto Poplar and see the gleaming, modern Memphis Union Mission building doing a lighthouse and land office business in the matter of rescuing men from sin.

This permanent home was opened and dedicated on

September 1, 1945. What an illustration it has proved to be of the miraculous power of God. Five months before, it had not even been started. It proved that God can create something from nothing, if men but meet His conditions. Jimmy's heart swelled in gratitude for the past and in anticipation of the future. He thought of the "Soap, Soup and Salvation" slogan of the mission, and of the following poem which a mission convert had written:

THIS WONDERFUL THREE

"Soap, soup and salvation" may cause you to smile,  
But this combination is really worthwhile;  
'Tis three great essentials in everyday life,  
And put into practice by Jimmy and wife.

When poor down and outs to the Mission do grope,  
The first thing they get is a bar of good soap.  
The next on the program, their strength to recoup,  
Jimmy will give them a bowl of good soup.

Our bodies are temples where should dwell within  
The Spirit of Him who can save us from sin;  
But the Spirit of Christ cannot be reconciled,  
To dwell in a temple unclean and defiled.

When one is all filthy and grimy with dirt,  
With morale sunk low and self respect hurt,  
And hungry and weak so you walk with a stoop,  
There's much to be said for the soap and the soup.

The soap is essential to cleansing the skin,  
The soup and salvation are taken within;  
The soup gives you strength and ambition to hope,  
Salvation comes after the soup and the soap.

When you're filthy without and hungry within,  
You're not in a mood for repentance from sin;  
But soap in the shower and soup in the bowl,  
Put you in condition to think of your soul.

"Soap, Soup and Salvation": when this you apply,  
Make you ready to live and prepare you to die;  
And at Jimmy's NEW MISSION, this wonderful three,  
The soap and the soup and the salvation are free.

Given the privilege of holding the first meeting in the new chapel was the Memphis Youth for Christ group. Enthusiastic young people gave the Mission a splendid premiere for its fine new building. The next night the regular Mission meetings started. They have been conducted every night without exception until this day. When the Youth for Christ rallies later were moved to a neutral hall, the mission meetings continued on Saturday night in the chapel.

Jimmy has been forced many times to look back with awe at those first five months. There were trials, to be sure, but not once did God allow him to be discouraged about the final outcome. The miracles of the first five months of preparation and planning had provided much fuel for the days ahead.

But if the first five months have left you with the feeling of God working miracles, the months ahead will leave you with that impression in an even more genuine way. Idea-filled Jimmy Stroud had more than the usual mission in mind when he came to Memphis. The by-products of this great work now have fanned out so far that no fewer than 30 different ministries are carried on through the Memphis Union Mission.

Through each avenue of service to Christ, men and women, young and old, are coming to know Christ as personal Saviour. Carrying on mission work is in itself a hard task, and takes the best in any Christian to make it a success. Not only has the Memphis Union Mission been unusually used of God in its normal work, but it has spread its wings into areas which are in desperate need of spiritual help without in any way hampering the basic task of serving as a sentinel against sin along Skid Row boulevard.

It has been a thrill to see the Memphis Union Mission born.

Now let's watch it take its first steps and grow into a healthy, active youngster in less time than anyone could think possible.

## STRETCHING OUT . . . THIRTY WAYS!

LIFE IS replete with "flashes in the pans." You likely know of many in your own experiences. Perhaps it was some person who took your crowd by storm for a few months, then just as quickly eased out of the picture. Today, no one knows where he or she is.

Or it may have been some well-meaning organization which was set up to do a certain job. Enthusiasm ran high for the first months; people were willing to support it with time and money. Suddenly, something went wrong. Before you knew it, it was a thing of the past. You ride along and see an empty office and someone says to you,

"Say, whatever did happen to that outfit?"

Rapid growth often presages rapid decline. Some of you might wonder about the Memphis Union Mission in that respect. You have seen that within five months after Jimmy Stroud reached Memphis services were being held in a remodeled building which had cost \$43,000 to buy and put into spiritual shape.

There had been no rapid decline. God had seen to that. As you ride along Poplar Avenue in downtown Memphis you might well ask the person with whom you're riding,

"Say, whatever did happen to that outfit?"

But you'll be asking it with mouth agape as you try to coordinate in your mind the many things which it has done in its first few years of existence.

Most rescue missions carry on several phases of work.

The nature of the task is such that varying aspects of Christian service open up constantly and regularly. Slow

indeed is the mission head who does not take advantage of these openings to reach people for Christ.

Yet, God has so used the Memphis Union Mission that it now has no less than thirty ways in which it is getting the gospel story to people in the Memphis area.

And yet, only a rescue mission?

Basically, yes.

Jimmy Stroud is convinced that a rescue mission can be the nerve center of a strong network of evangelism which will reach all types of people in any city. The Memphis experience is proving his theory as through practice it is doing a sound, genuine job of turning an entire city Christward.

Trace with us the avenues of service which the Mission is using. Your heart will be thrilled and challenged at what has been done and is being done.

The nightly meeting is the focal spot of all Mission work. It provides an atmosphere of worship each evening of the week in a comfortable, attractive refuge from the raucous street life outside. Many take advantage of the soothing presence of God in these services. Jimmy has said a number of times that if it were necessary to curtail all of the activities of the Mission except one, he would choose to continue the nightly evangelistic services. They give something beautiful, permanent and reliable to lives otherwise barren or depressed.

As often as not, Jimmy leads these meetings. On many occasions he does the preaching. One of the converts at the Mission told us,

"When Jimmy preaches, we have as good results as at any other time. He has a way of talking that digs deep into men's hearts. He knows these people well."

Promptly at starting time he'll move up to the platform to start the song service with his capable singing voice. He may not have a written "order of service" on a piece of paper, but every part of the program is God-directed both in his



heart and in his head. Testimonies might be called for at any time. The informal manner of the services puts the men at ease. When humor fits in, it is used. People in the audience soon realize by the very manner in which he leads the meeting that there is an unsurpassable joy in Christianity.

Men who have spoken at the Mission have been of the best. They include Dr. Charles E. Fuller, Dr. Robert A. Cook, Dr. Robert G. Lee, Dr. Torrey M. Johnson, Rev. James McGinlay, Dr. Mervin Rosell, Dr. Percy Crawford, Dr. Bob Jones Jr., Homer Rodeheaver, Jimmy Johnson, Dr. Vincent Bennett and many others equally as well known. Jimmy reasons that what is good enough for the best of people is not too good for the men off the street. The best will bring out their best.

No service is closed without an invitation to sinners to accept Christ as Saviour. Thousands of men have knelt at the altar of prayer at the chapel front, indicating a desire to take Christ into their lives. (Stories of many of them will provide food for a later chapter). They have come into the Mission in drunken stupors; they have gone out sobered, born again men and women.

They have come for a cup of coffee and a little food; they have tasted of the Bread of Life and drank of the Living Water.

They have come to sneer and to make fun of religion; they have gone out with salvation in their hearts.

Sincerity may not have been found in all of their hearts, but in hundreds of cases God has done a real work of grace.

Men who stay overnight at the Mission must attend the evening meeting. After the service they are carefully registered by Sid Allen, the night man, and admitted to the dining hall where they are fed. Next in line is the shower room, itself scrubbed to perfection, where the men disrobe and take their shower baths. All men must take showers before going to bed. Of the men coming to the Mission, some are very dirty,

some barely dirty, but all in need of a shower. Jimmy once said,

"Some of them must be nicknamed 'Flannel' because they shrink so from washing."

Their clothes are left downstairs in lockers and they are given clean gowns for the night. Up one flight they go to the men's dormitory. You would be surprised at the cleanliness of that dormitory. It has double-decker beds, purchased from the army, with the bedding sparkling clean. The floors are cleaned regularly and kept waxed and shining. Alongside a little writing table by the window is a reminder for the men to write home. A Bible also is there. The Mission is not in the free hotel business, Jimmy is often forced to explain. Every bed and every meal is geared to but one thing—winning men to Christ. The greatest thrill any mission leader ever had is kneeling and praying with some man who realizes that he is being helped for no mercenary reason but because of a sincere desire to win him to Christ.

Fourteen full-time workers keep things moving at the Mission. The employees publish a little paper, "The Echo," which serves as a morale builder and house organ. It shows clearly the joy of service found in the workers.

The caring for wayward and wandering men thus is the No. 1 activity of the Mission and most of its funds are used in reaching these men. (The Mission's assets, by the way, have grown to \$90,000 in four years.) Nothing is too small to do for any man. Few things are too large or out of the Mission's reach in its goal of winning him to Christ. Skid Row is a slippery street. In many cases, a shovel or two of cinders is enough to keep him from losing his balance. At other times, the Mission serves as an abrupt stopgap as it brings a man to a position where he realizes his dependence on God. But at all times, a helping hand pointing men to Jesus Christ.

Ministry No. 2 fits in well here. It is the noon hour prayer meeting for employees and for anyone else who cares to come. At five minutes before noon, a recording of "Sweet Hour of Prayer" is sent over weather-proof loud-speakers located on the roof of the building. Stenographers six blocks away have reported hearing it. Sharply at noon the prayer period begins. It is the power house of the Mission. Strangers stop in almost every day. Business men in nearby stores have been seen to come to their doors to listen to the old hymn of the church even as below in the chapel the prayer time is going on.

A song is sung. Prayer requests which have come in the mail are read. Other requests are given orally before the group bows its knees for prayer.

One day a lady stopped in from the street. Her appearance showed that her life had not been free from sin. When it came time for the prayer requests she said,

"My son has refused to see me because of the life I have been living. I have a Christmas present here for him. Would you pray that when I go to see him this afternoon he will at least accept this gift from me."

Jimmy and others in the group prayed. During a quiet moment, she started to pray. She cried out to God about her sorrow and sin. When she rose from her knees, a pool of tears remained on the altar. She tucked the package under her arm, thanked them, and slipped quickly out.

The following day she was back. She told joyfully how her son had accepted her and of a fine reunion. Several nights later she stood to her feet during one of the evening chapel services and told of her acceptance of Christ as her Saviour.

On another day, a man heard the recording, stopped to listen, then went on his way. The song rang in his mind all day. That night his feet were drawn to the Mission where . . . he made a profession of faith in Christ as Saviour.

The noon prayer time is the power plant of the Mission.

Eternal values come to light as hearts are knit together in prayer and devotion to God for the efforts of the morning and the hours to come.

Then into the dining room they go. Jimmy as likely as not will rap on the table to get their attention, then say, "Let's pray." After that the banter of a happy group of workers is heard as they talk with each other about the many details which arise in a day's work.

\* \* \*

Youth for Christ is mentioned third not because it is more important than other phases but because it has proved to be of such unusual blessing to the entire city and surrounding area. But, you say, who ever heard of a Mission sponsoring a Youth for Christ rally? Should young people attend the same place as men and women steeped in sin? Can the same organization sponsor both successfully?

Jimmy Stroud has proved that it not only is possible, but successfully possible. As mentioned before, the first meeting in the new mission building was a youth rally. Memphis Youth for Christ remained independent of any national or international organization and was tied to no church or denomination. In one way, it was the youth department of the Mission, extending not only to underprivileged youth but to all youth of Memphis and of Shelby county.

Jimmy had three things in mind in conducting the rallies: (1) reaching the thousands of unchurched youth; (2) developing young Christian talent and giving youth an opportunity to serve; (3) to send young people back to their churches better equipped to cooperate as members.

The rallies are not similar to regular church services, nor even the meetings at the Mission chapel. Young people take charge of the music and the singing. A time for testimonies gives them opportunity to say what is on their hearts. Informality reigns from beginning to end. It is an example in

its very program that Christian young people are having a wonderful time.

Memphis Youth for Christ held its first meeting in June, 1945, at 200 North Main Street. The crowd was small, though enthusiastic. The next week seventeen young people met for lunch at the Peabody Hotel to lay definite plans for continuing. The crowds grew from week to week. Jimmy did much of the speaking at those early meetings. Soon the building at 200 North Main was packed to capacity. A committee meeting in August, 1945, lasted for four hours after the meal was served and proved to be the place where the groundwork and definite details of the rallies were outlined.

Rallies in September soon taxed the Mission hall to capacity. Character Builders Hall at 22 South Claybrook was next used. The businessmen who operated the hall refused to take any rent and even paid for the light and heat. The committees were clicking, the usherettes working well, the robed choir beginning to sing at the rallies, and leading speakers across the nation contacted. Crowds dipped from time to time, but after each recession there was a noticeable overall increase.

Best of all, hundreds of young people accepted Christ as Saviour at the gatherings as God used such youth leaders as Mervin Rosell, Bob Cook, Torrey Johnson, Jimmy Johnson, Harry Rimmer and many others in presenting the way of salvation. One pastor wrote to Jimmy,

"My young people were thrilled to the depths of their souls at the Youth for Christ rally. They all have been in church regularly ever since. Two teen-age girls have started a Monday night rally for the juniors and intermediates of our church. One young man, a teen-ager, is now leading the song services. A middle-aged, unstable Sunday School teacher has finally found solid ground and our own Youth for Christ rally here is growing rapidly."

Two young men from Little Rock, Arkansas, were con-



verted in Youth for Christ and went home to inspire their pastor to hold revival meetings in the church.

For a time, the building at 200 North Main was made into a Youth for Christ Lounge for use as a social center during the week. It contained a library, a Christian juke box, sports, games and refreshments. For a number of weeks a radio program was broadcast directly from the Lounge over WMPS in Memphis.

December 22, 1945, proved to be the first high spot in four successful years of Youth for Christ. The large Ellis Auditorium was rented for a big YFC-sponsored Christmas party. Gifts were given to all who attended. Mrs. Billy Sunday paid a repeat visit to Memphis to find the Auditorium filled to capacity. Best of all, 45 young people came forward at the invitation to accept Christ as Saviour or to re-dedicate their lives to Him.

\* \* \*

From this enthusiastic group of young people have come a number of other ministries which the Mission supervises. One of the most important is a Bible Study session held on Monday nights, taught by Mrs. Verla Pettit, secretary of the Mission. When the Youth for Christ rallies were first started, the need for personal workers led to the formation of a Personal Workers Bible class taught by the Rev. Milton Wright. Each Saturday night at the rallies class members put into practice what they have learned during the week as they deal with those who come forward.

The fifth avenue of service also is youth-centered. It deals with the Musical Clinics. These were started in 1946 to give young people an opportunity to learn more about piano playing, chorus work, or other phases of music. Memphis youth thus were trained to appear on the Saturday night programs. Lee Baum, associate director of Youth for Christ, now directs this work as well as the various musical groups which sing for special occasions as well as regular rallies.

Much else is done to reach the youth. A Scripture reading and memorization contest was held in 1946, with additional points given for bringing people to the rallies. Winners were given a free trip to the Ben Lippen Bible conference. Result: Memphis had more young people there than any other city in the country. Another year a group of them went to the Youth for Christ International convention at Winona Lake, Indiana. The YFC'ers adopted their own foreign missionary, Lyle Sharp, who together with his wife and two little boys is ministering to the Indians in Beni, Bolivia. When another Memphis missionary couple, the Lemleys, came home on furlough from Mexico, 32 young people pledged themselves to go out as missionaries during the rally at which they spoke.

Memphis Youth for Christ has started many others in the area. Men from as far away as Springfield, Illinois, and Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, have come to Memphis to examine its pattern of carrying on. Young people from Myrtle, Mississippi, were so enthused about Memphis Youth for Christ that they went home and started a rally in their own town. Jimmy keeps the rally filled with new items. When a special high school night was held two weeks in a row, Tech High won the trophy awarded. In receiving the trophy the principal stated, "This is the most important trophy we have won in our thirty years of existence."

The principal, incidentally, was given a new hat by Youth for Christ because his school won.

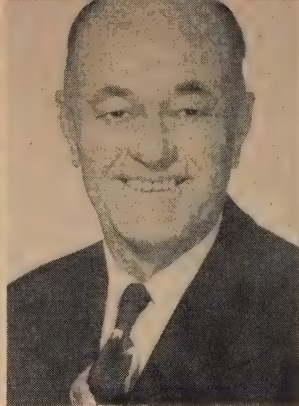
The rally has been of utmost help in reaching sailors stationed at the nearby Millington naval base. It has proved to be a gathering place for Christian youth to counteract the sin spots which lure youth on a Saturday night. The peculiar blessing which has been on Youth for Christ in its expansion to 59 countries of the world has not by-passed Memphis. As Jimmy told reporters one day,

"Youth for Christ is definitely on the march in Memphis. Each month since it started it has seen some unusual thing

shoot it ahead to new heights. We are confident it will continue in the future. I see in Youth for Christ the nucleus for a nationwide revival. Already, more than a score of our Memphis young people are in Christian colleges, seminaries or Bible institutes because of having been inspired, encouraged and helped by Youth for Christ."

Other things also have stemmed from Memphis Youth for Christ. One of the most important is what Memphis now knows as "16 Big Days." It takes place each autumn and brings to Memphis leading speakers and musicians for an extended evangelistic campaign in Ellis Auditorium.

But this chapter has not enough room for this sixth outlet of service, so we turn another page.



Some MUM converts as they are today (left to right); Hank Sajonce, now a busy business man active in a local church; Willard Crofoot who serves the Lord cheerfully as employee of Sales Organization in Memphis, also member of a local church; L. E. Brown and his son George. Their unique stories are contained in this book.

The Cabinet Shop owned by the Memphis Union Mission and operated for the purpose of rehabilitating men and offering gainful employment while they are being built up in the faith.







Each September Memphis Union Mission and the Youth Rally sponsor a big city-wide 16-day evangelistic campaign. It begins with a "kick-off" banquet at the Peabody Hotel and a parade to the auditorium, led by mounted police.

The parade as it moved down the main street to the auditorium, all young people carrying placards announcing the meeting or giving some testimony.





## 16 BIG DAYS . . . RADIO . . . TELEPHONE

"WELL, other things may have worked, but *this* surely will flop."

When Memphis Youth for Christ was to celebrate its first anniversary, an idea hit Jimmy Stroud.

"Why not," he thought, "have a 13-day evangelistic campaign in the biggest place in the city, Ellis Auditorium."

Not a few people shook their heads when that announcement was made. This time, they felt, Jimmy was biting off more than he could chew.

But, it worked.

And worked wonderfully well.

The "13 Big Days," as Jimmy tagged it, proved to be a "howling success." It started with a banquet at the Hotel Peabody when 583 people paid \$1.85 each to get things started. Banners on long poles were tacked to each table. Immediately after the banquet the young people took the banners, formed a parade, and marched up Main Street to Ellis Auditorium for the kickoff rally.

For the next 13 days, September 28 through October 10, 1946, God moved in the midst of Memphis. Young people by the scores dedicated and surrendered their lives to Christ. Some put their faith in Christ for the first time. Dr. Bob Jones Jr. spoke the first eight nights. He was followed by Homer Rodeheaver and his sister, Ruth Rodeheaver Thomas. Guest soloist Doris Doe, former opera singer, chose to sing such beautiful gospel hymns as "What a Friend We Have in Jesus," and "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross."

Climaxing the campaign on the final two nights was Dr. Charles E. Fuller of the Old Fashioned Revival Hour. (Memphis was the second city in the country to have Dr. Fuller two nights in succession). Pianist Rudy Atwood accompanied him. Five thousand people gathered in Ellis Auditorium each night. When the campaign was over, many people went home saying that it was the biggest thing that had happened in Memphis since Billy Sunday had been there a quarter of a century before.

A year later a similar campaign was held. Speakers included Torrey M. Johnson, Robert A. Cook, Fred Brown, Percy Crawford, Mrs. Billy Sunday, Rodeheaver, the Couriers for Christ and many others.

In 1948, Jimmy found that thirteen days were not enough. He needed three more, so the campaign became "16 Big Days." On hand were Howard Skinner, Merv Rosell, Curt Davis, Fred Brown, Pat Withrow, Bob Jones Jr., and others. Year after year it was not the outstanding men of God who drew the crowds and made people decide for Christ. It was the moving of the Holy Spirit which marks every phase of the Missions work.

Could it get bigger, and better?

It did, and likely will in the future.

The 1949 campaign saw 251 people make decisions for Jesus Christ. The 41 meetings during the 16 days drew an attendance of 40,511 people. Jimmy Johnson, Curt Davis, Phil Kerr, Arnie Hartman, Phil and Louis Palermo and others were on the program. Two men in their 70's were among the converts. What Jimmy told newspapermen following the first campaign was echoed after the 1949 series.

"This thing is a *must* on our program. It will be an annual event."

Radio has had a peculiar attraction for Jimmy Stroud. From the time of his conversion in 1935 until he came to Memphis he did a good deal of broadcasting. He had in his

mind a daily broadcast over a Memphis station when he first came.

He made a number of trips to WREC, one of the largest stations in the entire south. He visioned the thought of spreading the Word of God over WREC's vast coverage. But his enthusiasm was not matched by the program director and owner of the station. For a short time a program was aired over WMPS from the Youth Lounge, but was discontinued as the Lord's money was needed elsewhere at that time. In January, 1946, he told the Lord he was not going to fret himself over a radio program.

"I'm giving up this program, Lord, and I'm leaving all radio work up to you. I'll still be happy in my work here whether we are on the radio or not."

But five weeks later after he returned from visiting his mother in Florida, he was told to get in touch with Roy Wooten, program director of WREC. Roy Wooten is the brother of Hoyt Wooten, founder of WREC and the man who developed it into the leading station of the area.

Wooten told Jimmy that WREC wanted to put the Memphis Union Mission on the air with a daily broadcast. He wanted Jimmy to sketch out a program and be back in a couple of days. When Jimmy returned he asked,

"How many days do you want to broadcast, seven?"

"I think six would be enough," Jimmy replied, "but first, how much will all this cost us?"

Jimmy isn't easily surprised, but he was sort of jolted when Wooten said, "Not a cent."

So nine months after the first plans were made for the Mission, God made it possible for a daily broadcast over the key station in the mid-south. It taught Jimmy a lesson, too, and that was to leave things in the hands of God to be worked out. The program is titled, "Above the Clouds," using the same theme song as the youth rallies. It is heard at 6:05 o'clock each morning.

Letters of appreciation for the program have reached Jimmy from all parts of the mid-south. Many tell of heart-break and need and request prayer. A blind lady whose husband had left her with two boys, 8 and 6, requested "Under His Wings." One of the most interesting parts of the program is the Pen Club. It is made up of people interested in writing to shut-in people who need help and encouragement. Some people who have laid on beds of affliction for years have received mail for the first time.

Moving through the radio mail bag we find letters such as the following:

"Pray for my 22-year-old son in jail and for my four other children. Please do not throw this letter in the waste basket."

"I haven't walked since I was four. I have a class of eight girls in Sunday School."

"My 18-year-old son who was supporting me has just been killed. Pray that I may know that the Lord will provide."

"Thanks for visiting my son at Oakville sanitarium. He now has passed on, leaving myself and two other children, 6 and 4.

"No church near here, no place to go, so your program is our church."

"Pray for my husband. I ask for a dollar, and get a cursing. I don't know how much longer I can take it."

"Through your program and preaching over the radio I found my Lord dear to me. I had backslid for 14 years."

"Dad read your book to me last Sunday and in several places broke down for joy in the way you are handling difficult cases."



"My husband is an invalid, and I have an 86-year-old invalid mother. I am the postmistress, run the grocery store, the general station and bus depot. We need prayer."

But with the letters telling of hardship and sorrow, there have been others full of joy, and occasionally humor:

"Your program gets me out of bed."

"Wish you had an hour instead of 30 minutes."

"If we had more early devotions such as this, we'd have a better world."

"I listen while I dress for work."

"Please sing the number, 'I wonder Who's Kissing Her Now.'"

"I use it as an alarm clock to wake me up."

"C'mon out to visit our farm."

"I listen with one eye open."

"My baby son is two now. His name is Jimmy. I hope he grows up to be a man of God I believe you are."

"There's sawdust in your preaching, brother."

"What does the vision mean that I had?"

"Thanks for helping to put my daughter into college."

Thus the radio work of the Mission had established itself as a help to hundreds of people in the mid-south. The same informality and sense of friendship which characterizes the regular Mission work has carried over into the radio work. Listeners sense that interest and tone, and they go to the Mission for help and counsel.

Phase No. 8 of the Mission's ministry is one of the most unique and interesting. It is the telephone ministry, an avenue of gospel service now used by many.

Walk down a street in Memphis and someone may slip a small card into your hand, which reads,

Got Yourself in An Awful Fix?

Call 37-8501

Or walk into a hotel or railroad station and you may find on the desk a card which reads,

Before You Do Anything Desperate,

Call 37-8502

Call up either of those numbers, or another on yet another card with another message, and you'll hear a voice say,

"Hello, this is the Memphis Union Mission. We have a message for you, taken from God's Word."

Then follows a verse from the Bible, and a follow-up of the conversation if the caller desires.

One night a destitute girl, leaving an office building, was handed one of the cards. She called, was engaged in conversation and invited to the Mission for further help. She came and was converted. She told the Mission workers that she had been headed for suicide . . . when someone handed her a card with the Mission phone number on it.

So unique is this ministry that the Associated Press reported it on its nation-wide wire services when it was first started. Jimmy received clippings from newspapers across the country, including the *New York Times* and many other leading papers in our nation. Three of the five phone lines coming into the mission are used in the phone ministry. Each caller is given a verse of Scripture and a courteous and friendly reply. Some of the Mission converts answer the phones at different hours of the day and often are privileged to tell the callers what Christ has done for them.

During the first two years of the phone work, more than 300,000 calls were received or made.

A free "wake up" service also is provided for anyone who wishes to be called in the morning. Each evening the person on the night shift at the Mission phone finds a list prepared for him which reads,

5:30 a.m.      5-4566      Mr. Jones

At 5:30 the Mission worker will dial that number, get Mr. Jones on the phone, give him a Bible verse such as "This is the day which the Lord hath made, let us rejoice and be glad therein," as well as the time. When certain seasons of the year bring an unusual number of such calls, as men getting up to go hunting or fishing, Jimmy sees to it that appropriate verses are used for those occasions.

Young people at Youth for Christ rallies often are pitted against each other in choosing the "Verse of the Week." The winner is given a reward and his verse used the following week on the phone.

The telephone ministry has proved worthwhile in other places in America, and Memphis is now added to that list.

The next five ways in which the Mission serves Christ likely are true of every mission in existence. Through home visitation, the workers have opportunity to help people materially as well as spiritually. Many people in the area are hesitant about coming to a public meeting. They often do not have clothes good enough to wear. They are not usually anxious to have people visit their homes, either, but when opportunities present themselves, the Mission is there to help in any way it can.

Along with home visitation is hospital and sanitarium visitation. Many of the men who come to the Mission are in need of hospital care; the Mission sees that they get it. At other times, people many miles from Memphis will ask the Mission to visit someone at a hospital or the tuberculosis sanitarium. These "pastoral calls" to forgotten people in all

walks of life have been richly rewarded as many of those visited have made professions of faith in Christ. No visit is completed without the reading of the Word of God, if conditions at all warrant it, followed by a time of prayer together. No one not in similar positions can realize the value of these unexpected visits to lonesome, forgotten people.

Public and private schools in the area also are visited on different occasions either to inform the students what is going on at the Mission or to warn students of some of the evils they will be facing as they leave school and go into the work of their choice. Individual work also is carried on in the schools, especially in seeing that children of drunken parents are cared for and not made to feel ashamed at school because of the clothes they might be wearing or because of their parents.

Item No. 12 on our interesting list is clothing distribution. On one of our visits to the Mission we saw a lady worker hold up a lovely little jacket and say,

“Won’t this look nice on the little Jones girl in the next block. It’s one of the jackets I had for my own little girl and I just made it over.”

One of liquor’s unwelcome and distasteful results is that wives and children often go without food and clothing because there is no money left in the husband’s pocket when his night of drinking is over. That barefoot little tot mentioned earlier soon had a pair of shoes from the Mission clothes room. That pregnant girl who was left alone to face the shame of that double sin finds herself with a little baby outfit for her expected child. The mother who gives what clothes she has to keep her children warm finds a warm and comfortable coat on her back.

More than one man has been released from a prison or jail, determined to make a good, fresh start. More than one time the Memphis Union Mission has put a new suit of clothes on such a man, not knowing whether or not it



will be reimbursed for it. Much of the clothing is used clothing, but it is good clothing. No man or woman or child need be ashamed of wearing it as the Mission stays true to its principle of giving the best it has in order to bring out the best in the individual.

Distribution of clothing often works in with the distribution of Bibles, New Testaments, or smaller portions of the Bible. Hundreds of Bibles are given away each year to new converts and to others who need them. A Bible, in the Mission's way of thinking, is more important to a man than food or clothing. They can be found in conspicuous places all through the Mission building; they are there to be read. If anyone comes to the Mission and wants a Bible for his personal use, he gets one.

One of sin's by-products is trouble with the law. This is true not only in Memphis, but around the world. When the powerful arm of the law reaches into some home or to some individual and says, "Come with me," many friends suddenly are hard to find. Friendship was fine when all was well, but when trouble comes, it vanishes.

Many a man or woman in jail or prison finds himself or herself in desperate need. A prison sentence won't be his just reward. But, who is there to help these people, to steer back into acceptable society men and women.

In Memphis, some of that work is done by the Memphis Union Mission. It is not always pleasant work. The troubles which take hold upon people have a way of working their way into the hearts of Mission workers whose own hearts have been softened by the compassionate love of Jesus Christ. The ability to sift the genuine from the false is needed, and God has given that wisdom to the Mission workers in good portion.

If you found yourself in jail or prison in Memphis, you might find the Memphis Union Mission trying to help you in any of four ways, as pages to come will show you.

## “I WAS IN PRISON . . . ”

SOMEHOW the atmosphere of the court room was in discouraging contrast to what you had expected it to be. You had read in papers of criminal trials, of the actions of lawyers, of the expressions on the faces of defendants, of the relatives, of the judges. It seemed dramatic, full of conflict and excitement.

But now that you were sitting in the court room, you were depressed. There was such a discouraging feeling. Things seemed so drab. You felt sorry for almost everyone in the big court room. You wondered what went through the mind of the judge as he went through case after case.

You watched a deputy bring in a young lad of 18 or so. The charge: carrying a pistol without a permit. Guilty. Ninety days at the penal farm.

Next was a young Negro. Charge: carrying a knife. Guilty. Ninety days at the penal farm.

Two sisters walked to the rail when the next young fellow was brought in. Charge: carrying concealed weapons and starting a brawl in a beer tavern the night previous. Guilty. Fine—\$100. The sisters dig into their purses for the money as the brother is led back to the jail to await trial on another charge.

The girl brought in next is frightened and apparently out of place in this setting. Her problem: she had come to Memphis on the invitation of a married man. The first week she was there the wife of the man had both of them locked up. The man skipped his bond. The girl was thus all alone, far from home, and not knowing what to do.

Judge Sellers checked the facts for a few moments, then called from the audience a man anxious to be her friend.

"What would you do in this case, Mr. Stroud?"

"Let me have her," Jimmy Stroud answered, "and I'll take her to our girl's shelter at 1084 Poplar street."

On the record book went the notation,

"Remanded to Jimmy Stroud and the Memphis Union Mission."

The relieved girl, tears in her eyes, gets into the Mission car and is taken to the girls' shelter where she is given a much-needed bath. That night she attends the service in the Mission chapel. The Holy Spirit convicts her of her sin, and when the invitation is given, she accepts Christ as her Saviour. The next night she is on a bus on her way home to North Carolina. Four days later the Mission gets a letter that she is safely home and rejoicing in Christ.

In another court room, presided over by nationally-known Camellia Kelly, a young girl of eleven is before the court. She is in trouble for stealing. She lives with six other children and her mother in a single room. The question: should she be sent to an industrial home. Up speaks Mrs. Lucille Blagg, one of the Mission workers,

"Could she be sent to a Presbyterian home in Arkansas? Our Mission is ready to stand the expense of getting her there."

Judge Kelly grants permission. The intelligent-looking little girl trails Mrs. Blagg out of the court room and over to the Mission. They go downtown and buy her some new clothes. She is cared for at the Mission girls' shelter for a few days, then taken some miles away to the home in Arkansas.

Thus we see that the Mission has found itself doing a sizable bit of court work in addition to its many other activities. This fourteenth type of ministry has proved to be the difference between freedom or prison for many people in trouble. Jimmy, Mrs. Pettit and the other workers are regarded highly by Judges Sellers, Kelly and others. They

and the police appreciate the work done by the Mission in rehabilitating and re-adjusting to society the many cases turned over to them.

Mention has been made briefly of the girls' shelter. Its existence is another miracle moving of God. Jimmy's first plans on this project were to make such a shelter a part of the Mission building. Gradually, however, the Lord worked out something better.

Thus today at 1084 Poplar Street in Memphis you have the Henry Halle home, known as a temporary shelter for girls who need economic, physical or spiritual aid. Eight months after it was purchased on faith without any money in sight, a business man came into the office. No one had talked to him about the home. But in his hand was an unsolicited check for \$17,000 to pay for the property in full!

The large, spacious house also serves as living quarters for Jimmy and his family. The second floor has a fine guest room for visiting speakers. The three-floor building has 12 rooms, plus a large lounge. The dormitory for the girls is on the third floor; the play room is in the basement. Other businessmen in Memphis contributed to put it into tip-top shape. The S. R. Hungerford Company furnished the entire third floor, including the ten beds for the girls. The Krasner Furniture Company made a sofa for the first floor parlor. Stratton-Warner provided appliances and furniture. Orgill Brothers took care of the plumbing and much else.

Someone else donated a television set for the home. Extravagance? Too good for girls in trouble?

No, just in line with the Mission's aim of bringing out the best in people by trying to give them the best.

Dortha serves as matron of the home. It was opened formally on June 17, 1947, and has proved of a tremendous help to hundreds of girls ever since. Not too infrequently in this age of loose morals in which we live it serves as the only home for a girl about to have a baby out of wedlock.



Such girls are given as much sympathy and love as possible. After the birth of the baby, the girls are allowed to stay on indefinitely as they re-adjust their lives to move back into society.

Closely akin to the court work are the jail services. These are held regularly. Much of the "ammunition" on such Gospel trips is provided by men who have spent time in jail or prison but who have gone straight since accepting Christ. Workers from the Mission rate high with the jail officials and are welcome to carry on their work with the men. In one month alone in 1949, twenty jail meetings and visits were made. Many converts are realized. The Mission also invites the men to spend a night or two there after they are released. When they come they often are given new clothes, a Bible, food and lodging for a period and either sent on their way or helped in finding a new job.

The Shelby County Penal Farm is one of the Mission's destinations on Sunday mornings. One day a man named Louis King, just released from the Penal Farm, came to stay a few nights at the Mission. He told Jimmy that he had been teaching a Bible class each Sunday morning at the Farm for more than a year. He had been converted in prison, now had served his time and was on his way to the Moody Bible Institute to enroll as a student. Jimmy called Commissioner O. B. Ellis and arranged a conference. Out of it came permission for the Mission to conduct a weekly Bible class at the Farm from 9:30 to 10:30 Sunday mornings, the only group allowed to do this. Men are not only invited to accept Christ as Saviour but to come to the Mission for a few days on their release.

One such Sunday morning we slipped into the Mission station wagon with Sid Allen and headed for the Penal Farm. At our first stop we picked up a little old lady who was to play the piano. At our next stop we were joined by Hank, a former bartender at Halsted and Madison in Chicago who

had been converted on a Thanksgiving Day in Memphis after having been on a drunk for 48 straight days.

You appreciate your personal freedom on a morning like this. The sun in out. It is warm, nice. Driving into the Penal Farm grounds we saw a new Ford parked in front, a well-dressed and attractive lady sitting in the front seat. Up into the building we went, walking through a corridor dotted by spittoons every 15 or 20 feet. We were counted as we went through the gate up the flight of steps to a little chapel. The song books already were on the seats. The five of us moved to the front and sat down. The room was packed solid.

How they sang! Songs such as "What A Friend We Have in Jesus," and "There is Power in the Blood" echoed through the entire prison. The lady at the piano sang as she played. A prisoner sitting right behind us had a beautiful bass voice. He and three other fellows sang a quartet number. After two spirituals they were applauded back for a third. Sid Allen brought the message of the morning, and good it was. At his invitation a number of hands went up for prayer. It is not possible to deal with the men personally. Then with a final number and a closing prayer, it was over. We stood around for a few minutes and talked to the men. Most of them were young fellows. One fellow wanted to go into boxing when he was released. They caught him in Duluth as he was headed for Canada. His trouble? "Oh, I forgot to put 'Jr.' after some of the checks I signed with my father's name."

"You a Christian?" we asked.

"No," was his reply. "That doesn't work. Four of my uncles are preachers, though."

Terms up to five years are served at this Farm. As we walked out of the building to go to the station wagon, the men filed back to their cells for another day of imprisonment. Some, however, had had those bars on their souls lifted by decisions made that very morning.

On the way out we saw a red-eyed wife in conversation with her husband, separated by steel mesh wire. She was crying. He was none too happy. Two young ladies stood by another window, talking to a young fellow who looked like their brother.

Outside, a little boy played on the lawn.

You can't help but feel a lump in your throat and a thankfulness in your heart for the Memphis Union Mission and this seventeenth phase of its work. In a few moments we were back in downtown Memphis, walking along streets where people can do as they please and where no bars or cells hamper them.

But our own thoughts were back in that prison chapel, hearing those fellows sing, looking into their faces.

They were in prison. The Mission went to them.

\* \* \*

The desire to help men readjust themselves to life after becoming converted or being released from jail or prison led Jimmy into setting up the M.U.M. wood-working and cabinet shop. For a period when the mission first was started, some of the converts operated a garage. This has been replaced by the cabinet and furniture shop which handles all types of woodwork. Material made has been sold in all parts of the United States. Advertisements have been placed in such periodicals as *Christian Life*, telling the Christian public of the products available through the shop. This eighteenth type of ministry has been appreciated not only by men working in the shop, but also by a city which sees a former tax burden turning out to be a dependable citizen and workman.

Another phase of the work which will tug at your heart strings is Mud Island. This is located only a matter of minutes from the center of the city. The Mission soon discovered that the Island was completely neglected in a spiritual way. Little children, blue from the cold and running around

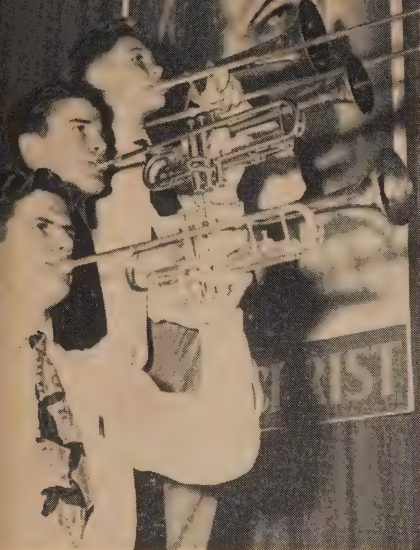
in the chill of winter with hardly any clothes on, knew nothing of Sunday school or church. A chapel was erected by the Mission. Services now are held every Sunday, and often during the week. People on the island helped to build the chapel and the little Sunday school pupils are proud of the place in which they meet.

The Mission also sponsors regular children's meetings. These meetings at first were held on Friday afternoons with Mrs. Thomas King as teacher. When she could no longer carry on the class, the Lord opened the door for Child Evangelism to take over. After songs and choruses, the children are taught Scripture stories. Next comes a full-length, Scriptural sound film. Jimmy has seen the hold which movies have on the minds of children and uses Bible-based films to drive home vital Christian truths. One of the best RCA projectors available was given to the Mission by the Memphis Junior Association of Commerce.

That introduces ministry No. 21—the film method of getting the Gospel out. Movies are shown at some of the evening sessions. The Mission in addition has its own film, "Down to Earth." It is in color and has had a sound track added. Pat Withrow Jr. is the narrator. It has been shown extensively in the mid-south region, with additional copies made for the Rev. James McGinlay to show in his meetings and for others. Some of the pictures are not the most pleasant to view, but a true picture of men and women on Skid Row is shown. In contrast, the film shows the way in which the Mission is serving as a stopgap against those conditions.

Soon after the Mission was opened, the Bible which is located in the front window of the main building was donated to the work. A new page is shown each day. One day one of the board members, Charles T. Wheat, came to Jimmy, and told him he would like to finance an open Bible stand where everyone could read it, preferably in Court





Talent at the Saturday night Youth Rally (left) Dale, Jerry and Harry playing the theme song "Above the Clouds": (right) a girl's trio.

A typical children's meeting held each Friday in the chapel of the Memphis Union Mission for children of this vicinity.





Dortha Stroud (Mrs. Jimmy) makes up the beds in the girl's dormitory, which adjoins the Stroud living quarters.

A candid camera shot taken at the opening of Memphis Union Mission. Seated from left to right: Mrs. Billy "Ma" Sunday, Dr. Robert G. Lee, and Pat B. Withrow.





Square. Jimmy agreed with him instantly, and they went to work on it.

It wasn't long before permission was obtained and the now-famous Bible Stand in Court Square in downtown Memphis was erected. Its installation and dedication attracted national attention. Newspapers from coast to coast printed items about it.

It was dedicated on April 7, 1948, a gift to the city of Memphis through the Mission and Mr. and Mrs. Charles T. Wheat. When Jimmy had met with the park commissioners, he was told they would take it under consideration. He insisted that he had to know within 30 days. The commissioners couldn't promise him action that fast, but within 30 days he did have permission.

The three-and-a-half foot square was designed by Wells Awsumb. A special conduit was run directly to the stand by the Memphis Light, Gas and Water Division. The stand is lighted night and day. It has a fan inside to keep the moisture from misting on the shatter-proof glass which is on top.

The late Dr. Walter Maier of the Lutheran Hour spoke at the dedication. Mayor Pleasants accepted the Bible and the stand in behalf of the city. The Tech High School band played and Patty and Peggy Wheat, daughters of the donors, were given the honor of unveiling the stone.

When they pulled the ropes, people gasped at the beauty of the stone. The large Bible inside was opened to Isaiah 53. The Gospel of John was the next portion to be read, a page each day, and then the portions reverted back to the Old Testament. Each night a worker from the Mission opens the lock and turns another page. At the dedication Dr. Maier told the throng of 3000,

"Thank God that church and state in America are constantly separated. We need to exercise constant vigilance to keep them separated."

The Mission heard favorable reactions about this twenty-second avenue of ministry from many corners of the country. Secretary James V. Claypool of the American Bible Society wrote to Jimmy,

"I think you have started something which is going to spread to a good many cities."

Shreveport, La., wrote asking for information. A man in Quincy, Mass., wants to put one in Boston Commons. Hollywood, Calif., wrote about placing one in Pershing Square. Inquiries came also from Dennison, Iowa; Oak Grove, La.; Stuttgart, Arkansas; Nashville, Tenn.; Chicago, Ill.; Chattanooga, Tenn.; State College, Pa.; Oakland, Calif.; Live Oak, Florida; Fort Worth, Texas; Atlanta, Ga.; South London, England, and many other places. So widespread was the demand for information that Jimmy had blueprints made of it and sent copies to all who asked for information. Dr. Maier also mentioned the project on his world-wide radio program.

Seven months after it was dedicated it was in the news again when three drunken sailors smashed the stand with a telephone receiver they had stolen from a taxicab. They took the Bible from the stand. Conviction and realization of what they had done reached their liquored minds when they got the Bible under a street light and saw what it was. They took it back and then confessed to police what they had done when they were apprehended. The stand was immediately repaired.

Another outlet of ministry has been Jimmy's opportunities to lecture on rescue missions at colleges and seminaries. As word got around of what God was doing at Memphis, he was invited to present the burden on his heart to the students on different campuses. Twice he has shown his film at Bob Jones University and saw several young men dedicate their lives to city mission work. Such work is not regarded by the Mission as promotion or publicity. It is regarded as an op-



portunity to place before others the tremendous need which exists for similar works in all parts of America.

We sat one night with Jimmy in a restaurant in Minneapolis after he had shown "Down to Earth" at the Founder's Week conference at Northwestern Schools. He was a bit discouraged that night as something had happened to the projector and not everyone had seen the entire film. He unburdened the desires of his heart to get more young men interested in rescue mission work. He realizes that to get missions started, businessmen with influence and finances must undergird the program. It is with this in mind that he goes to service clubs showing the film and speaking. He has spoken at a number of Rotary clubs, even as far away as St. Petersburg, Florida. (Jimmy himself was nominated by the Rotary club of Memphis as the outstanding young man of the city one year even though he had been a resident for only nine months when the award was made.)

The monthly magazine, *Down to Earth*, provides friends of the Mission with detailed reports of what is going on and what is to come. Its reports of conversions are thrilling. It has turned out to be a ministry in itself as it brings to people on a large mailing list the information and news of what is going on at the Mission. Each issue contains a detailed report on meetings held, people helped, decisions registered, etc. Jimmy supervises it, with Mrs. Verla Pettit as editor. Thousands of copies go out each month.

Ministry No. 25 in its first edition was the book you now are reading in its second and revised edition. "Down to Earth, the Memphis Story," had an unusual sale in its first edition. Reports of its blessing have come in from day to day. Request after request has come to the Mission for a detailed report of what God is doing. The book has helped to meet that need, but would that words could only convey the true picture and the warmth of the entire Mission.

Summertime often turns into God-forgetting time. So

often the church and the things of God are neglected in favor of the lure of the wide open spaces. The Mission steps up its youth program during the summer by encouraging and arranging young people to go to summer Bible camps and conferences. Helen Singleton thus spent an entire week at Winona Lake, Ind., because of having won a contest sponsored by Memphis Youth for Christ. As mentioned earlier, Memphis young people were the largest group in attendance at one of the Ben Lippen conferences. Seventeen attended the Youth for Christ convention together one summer at Winona Lake. When some of them come home, their eyes have been turned toward full-time Christian service, a thing for which Mission workers are in constant prayer in behalf of their young people.

You might not think that a rescue mission could serve as a rallying spot for a ministerial fellowship. But such has been the case in Memphis as the Evangelistic Pastor's Fellowship has been formed through the efforts of Jimmy and the Mission. Ministry No. 27, if you please. It was started in the summer of 1948. Today it has 33 cooperating pastors representing almost every denomination in Memphis. Cooperation comes on the foundation of soul-winning. Meetings are held the first Thursday of each month during the fall, winter and spring. Thirteen brief articles form the basis of the Fellowship. The chairman for 1950 is the Rev. W. O. Love of the Trinity Baptist church. Names of all converts during the "16 Big Days" are turned over to the fellowship for follow-up work where no church choice is marked by the convert. Names of all converts are sent to the pastor of their choice.

Ministry No. 28 has been the developing of missions in other places. A mission in Macon, Ga., already is well underway through the efforts of Memphis Union Mission. A second is developing at Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, and a third at Mobile, Alabama. They, of course, are in no way dependent on the Memphis Mission, but both originated and were started

through the influence of the Memphis work. Jimmy is burdened to see a rescue mission in every city of 25,000 or more people. He hopes that Memphis will prove as great a "rescue mission center" as Grand Rapids, Mich. No less than 66 missions started as a result of Mel Trotter's great work in Grand Rapids.

Open air evangelism is popular in the south, and the Memphis Mission carries on a great deal of it. Police permits have readily been granted when needed. Meetings often are held prior to the Youth for Christ rallies on Saturday evenings, with the listeners invited to the rally later in the evening. During the 1949 "16 Big Days" campaign something new was added when meetings were held each day at 12:30 noon in Court Square. Thousands of non-churchgoing people thus were reached with an effective presentation of the gospel. Not a few acknowledged Christ as Saviour in those open air services.

The way in which God provided a loud speaker system for the Mission is but another example of God's favor in its behalf. When the Mission was getting started Jimmy realized the need of a combined sound truck and station wagon for use in outdoor meetings, hauling food stuff, etc. A good buy was located, but not enough money was on hand to complete the purchase. Jimmy had the truck checked by Dave Jolly, member of the Mission board and head of a taxicab company in Memphis. Jimmy had just five days before a board meeting. He made out a list of 40 business men and set out to make a personal call on each of them.

He contacted 36 of the 40.

Thirty-one of the 36 gave him a check. The total of them came to \$1220.00.

Jimmy took the 31 checks with him to the board meeting, and just before the meeting was to be adjourned he told them of the need for a new sound truck. The faces which only a moment before had that expectant look of adjourn-

ment now grew sober and thoughtful as they thought of the money involved.

Instead, Jimmy pulled out the stack of checks and announced the total. They all laughed, and then as a matter of form authorized the purchase.

So many times the best is left to the last. So it is with the thirtieth avenue of Christian service which the Mission uses, or will use, in days to come. It is the culmination of dreams and hopes not only of Jimmy Stroud but of many people who have been in Memphis much longer than he has. The story of how it has developed is destined to make the Memphis Union Mission an even greater miracle of God than before. When Jimmy first started talking about it, once again many people shook their heads and said, "It can't be done."

But God has honored his limitless faith until as this is being written it is nearing completion.

What is it?

A downtown Youth Evangelistic Auditorium!

Taste and see once again what the Lord hath done.



## “MY BURDEN FOR MEMPHIS”

IF YOU PICKED up a copy of the *Memphis Commercial Appeal* on Tuesday, September 28, 1948, you would have seen a five-column, 20½-inch deep advertisement with the following headline captions on the top:

I Challenge You to Read This Carefully and Prayerfully

“My Burden for Memphis”

We already are \$16,000 on Our way.

A lot of people doing a little

Can Meet the Spiritual Need of Downtown Memphis.

Thousands of Sailor Boys have been Entrusted to Us!

If Memphis people by this time did not know of Jimmy Stroud and what he was trying to do in civic and religious enterprises, they might easily have slipped past that ad as “just another crackpot with an idea.” But the Memphis Union Mission had built confidence in itself in the few years of its existence. Memphians realized that they had in their city something unusual.

So, they read that ad.

It started out as follows:

“Today I want to talk heart-to-heart with all who really care concerning the future of our youth. I want this message to speak and serve as a challenge to all who would like to see Memphis a harder place in which to do wrong and an easier place to do right. I have a burden I want to share with you. Not only do I have a burden, but the same God that gave me the burden also has given me the wonderful vision as to the need and what to do about it. I believe that God is going

to make this vision a reality—to the glory of Christ and for the spiritual fortification of Memphis—through the gifts, prayers and influence of those who read this today.”

He went on to tell of a burning passion in his heart for a Downtown Youth Auditorium for Memphis. He told of what Memphis Youth for Christ had been able to do in three years without missing a single Saturday night, the very night that had long since been allotted to the devil for vice, hilarity and worldly pleasures. He told of looking for a downtown auditorium for use of rallies when he first came to Memphis, and of being unable to find one. He made it clear that he felt the answer to juvenile delinquency is to win young people to a personal faith in Jesus Christ and to get older folks on fire for God.

He stated with pungent force the need for such an auditorium and what it would do for Memphis. He hit constantly at the basic need in life—knowledge of Jesus Christ as Saviour. He pleaded with those reading the advertisement not to forsake the downtown area of Memphis, reminding them that only three churches were located there and that for three months of the year no Sunday evening services were held. He emphasized the responsibility of Memphians in caring for the spiritual needs of the 11,000 sailors stationed at nearby Millington.

When he mentioned the financial need of \$80,000 he told the people that a circus coming to Memphis takes that much money out of the city in one stay.

You could not set that advertisement aside without some kind of response in your heart. Here was a young man baring his heart before a people he had come to love in caring for the debris of life on their city streets. To anyone without spiritual eyesight, the idea was far-fetched. Even to Christians it may have been discussed and tossed aside as a mere dream.

But Jimmy Stroud, backed by a progressive board and a vision-filled staff of workers, was on a crusade. Ten days later in the *Memphis Press Scimitar* of October 8, 1948, the "second edition" of his advertising program faced the readers. It was another large ad, same size as the first, but with a different picture of Jimmy in it. The major caption was:

WE ARE ALREADY \$29,000 ON OUR WAY!

The advertising copy told of the quick response to the initial announcement and how God had brought in \$13,000 in ten days. Encouraging also was the response the idea had met with by the public. Complete strangers nodded to him on the streets, told him to go to it with friendly pats on the back. This second broadside was aimed at the closing days of the 16-day campaign and once again urged readers to back up the drive with financial gifts. Pastors joined in hearty approval. Rev. Robert G. Cannon wrote,

"God only knows what good will result in this forward step. Please count me in on this important move and rest assured I will support it heartily. I think you will have the support of every soul-winning pastor and the loyalty of the good laymen of all the churches, assuring you success in this fund-raising campaign."

In mind was an auditorium seating 750 to 1000 people. It would have facilities to accommodate evangelistic services as well as music recitals and concerts. Recreational facilities would include a lounge, refreshment quarters, radio and television room, game room, music studios, choir rehearsal room, Christian library, prayer room, and motion picture facilities for Christian films and newsreels. In the basement would be a kitchen and dining room for council meetings and church banquets, with a seating capacity of 200. The building would be air-conditioned throughout.

Keyed to the newspaper ads were radio broadcasts on all of Memphis' stations. These were donated free of charge

and found the programs going on WREC at 8:15 a.m., WWEM at 10:15 a.m., WHBQ at 11:30 a.m., WMC at 2:15 p.m., WMBS at 5 p.m., WDIA at 6:15 p.m., and WHHM at 11 p.m.

The fall campaign had been primed a few months earlier by the Gavel Club of the city sponsoring a morning breakfast at which \$10,100 was raised. Dr. Charles E. Fuller returned to Memphis to speak at a dinner one evening and at a city-wide rally the following night. Edward R. Murrow, head news announcer on the Columbia Broadcasting System, came on April 23 and 24 to help along by speaking at two meetings. So impressed was he by the Mission and the job it was doing and planning to do that he turned back to Jimmy the check given him for coming to Memphis. When he got back to New York, he sat down and wrote out another check for the same amount and sent it to add to the auditorium fund!

The campaign committee was composed of Edmund Orgill, Maj. Thomas B. Allen, Dave Jolly, Rodney Baber, and Earle R. Whittington. With the active support of these men and backed by other members of the board of directors, an all-out offensive was launched to go over the top for the financial needs.

In September, 1949, a large sign went up on a purchased lot at Poplar and Front Streets, telling Memphians:

Site for America's First

YOUTH EVANGELISTIC  
AUDITORIUM

76 by 148 feet

Only \$31,000 More Needed

Help Us Reduce This

Memphis Union Mission, Inc.

107 Poplar

Youth Auditorium Fund



When the board voted to purchase the lot, the members went as a group to the proposed site and had a prayer meeting right on the spot in the middle of the day. That step in September, 1949, was the first indication of the vision becoming a reality.

Then occurred another miracle of the power of God to answer prayer and supply the needs of the work. Two weeks after the directors had met at the auditorium site thanking God for what He had done and trusting Him to provide the additional \$31,000 needed, the *Commercial Appeal* carried the news one morning that Mrs. Ralph May had stated in her will that one-fourth of her estate should go to the Memphis Union Mission for the Youth for Christ auditorium. Thus the prayer already had been answered. The news item in the *Commercial Appeal* came as a straight surprise to everyone at the Mission as no one knew of the bequest.

As this is being written, plans are being made for the beginning of construction. The entire project has moved along at such a miracle pace that it has been hard to keep pace with it. The new building will in no way hinder the regular work to be carried on at the Mission. Rather, it will complement it. In the not too far distant future, Memphis will have its Youth Evangelistic Auditorium, as God continues to work miracles.

As we have wended our way through the Mission and its thirty avenues of ministry, we have not bothered to stop long in describing the fourteen people working with Jimmy in carrying on the work. Each one of the fourteen seems to have been hand-picked by God for his task. Sid Allen and Miss Bessie Heckle are in charge of the Mission building. Mrs. Verla Pettit resigned a position with a commercial firm to work full-time in the office as Jimmy's secretary. She also directs the weekly Bible class on Monday nights as well as the "Ladies Day" program on the Friday morning radio period. When her former employer had received the announcement

of the opening of the Mission in 1945, he had flipped it over onto Mrs. Pettit's desk. She read the announcement and said, "I'd just love to work in a place like that."

That desire was to be realized.

Lee Baum came to the Mission in 1948 to be associate director of Youth for Christ and in charge of all the music. He is the author of sixty choruses and hymns and worked for seven years at Soul's Harbor in Columbus, Ohio. He has been trained musically at Baylor University, Erie, Pa., Conservatory of Music, Moody Bible Institute, Stillwater, Okla., A. and M. College, and the Baptist Seminary at Louisville. The type of work he does was shown at Christmas, 1948, when a 200-voiced choir presented Gaul's "Holy City," an hour and twenty minute musical program, aided by a 25-piece symphony orchestra which he also trained.

Other employees will vary from time to time. Many of them are converts of the Mission who work while being rehabilitated. Others also work in the MUM cabinet and wood-work shop mentioned earlier.

Recent progress in the Mission work has, of course, centered on the youth auditorium, but the Mission itself has continued to grow and expand. A 22-foot frontage lot on Poplar Street, which had been owned by the city, recently was deeded to the Mission as a gift. In days to come a building likely will be erected there to take care of additional needs.

Thus we have seen in greater and lesser detail the thirty ways in which the Memphis Union Mission does business for God among the Skid Row population of the city. We've also seen that a Mission need not refrain from attempting to reach the city's youth and even among the "up and outers." We have wondered, at times, how far the vision and the passion for souls contained in Jimmy Stroud will lead us. Wherever it carries us we are assured that directly or indirectly we will find consecrated men and women presenting Jesus Christ as the answer to a needy, crying and confused world.

But, you say, what about the people the Mission has helped?

Where are they?

What are they doing?

Give us definite flesh and blood examples of the way God has worked. Let us hear from their own lips of the way in which God has saved their souls and revolutionized their lives.

We have been waiting as long as you have for the next chapter. It is the pay-off as far as the entire work is concerned. In the first four and a half years of the Mission's work, 1846 people professed conversion in Jesus Christ. Names of all of these people have been sent to churches in the Memphis area. We only wish we could go into thorough detail in each of the 1846 or the other hundreds who have been helped by the Mission. We know that what you will read will stir you as few things can stir you. Testimonies do that.

Out of the murky clay, Christ has lifted them!

## “OUT OF THE MIRY CLAY.”

JIM HAD been drunk for five months the night that he came to the Memphis Union Mission. The evening service was over when with dragging, faltering step and with bleary, downcast eyes he opened the Mission door. He had stood in front of the building for ten minutes, trying to decide whether to go in. He was miserably unhappy. Conviction of his wrongdoings was heavy on his heart. He realized he had taken the wrong path in life.

Why Jimmy Stroud happened to be in the office that morning at one o'clock he does not know. But he does know that the “steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in His way” (Ps. 37:23). Jimmy helped him into the office, sat him down, and listened to the story of a bewildered, tired, discouraged and downhearted man.

In November, 1944, 31-year-old Jim, a perfect picture of vigorous manhood, came home from the army with an honorable discharge. He boarded a bus at Hattiesburg, Mississippi, en route to his home in Memphis. The bus met with an accident and was completely wrecked as it turned over three times. Jim escaped with a sprained ankle and three broken ribs. When he reached Memphis he had a doctor tape him up, then went out for a drink, unmindful that God had preserved him from death or perhaps permanent injury.

Two weeks later he was sufficiently recovered from his injuries and partially recovered from his drinking binge to obtain a job as a superintendent at the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company. But six weeks later he came to work so



drunk that the guard would not let him on the grounds. He lost his temper, cursed the guard and walked off the job.

A few days later he was in Camden, Arkansas, working on another job which paid him \$130.00 a week. Soon, however, alcohol forced him off of that job. At Whitmore, Arkansas, he worked on a plantation, his family working by his side and trying to keep him from drink. But he only drank the more. When a hard rain came and washed off the crop, Jim lost faith in everything and everybody. He left the job, his wife and two children at the mercy of the world. Drink had brought him to the lowest point of manhood and dulled his conscience as to what he was doing.

For weeks he wandered around the country, sleeping and eating where he could and what he could. He arrived in New York and obtained a job as a painter on a 50,000 gallon water tank. He worked on a six-inch board hanging by ropes 200 feet from the ground. The wind was so strong at times that they could paint only by making quick swabs at the tank as they were blown close to it. It was good money however, even though it didn't last. It was nothing for Jim to spend \$150.00 in two days of drinking.

One day when Jim and his partner were painting the riser pipe of the tank from their tossing swing, Jim stepped on a spot of wet paint, slipped and fell. As he went slithering into the void he managed somehow to grab a rope and his companion pulled him back onto the board after a hard struggle. The jolt sobered him. He didn't say much for the next minutes, standing quietly as the shivers passed away.

Then as he stood on that swaying platform, he heard very distinctly his mother's voice. It was so clear that without thinking he answered. His partner asked,

"What are you talking about, Jim?"

"Oh, nothing," he replied. "Only . . . mother just called me. I'm going home to Memphis."

The other man told him he was imagining things.

"Imagining or not," Jim told him, "I'm going back to Memphis."

He climbed down immediately. On reaching the ground he hurried to wash up, change clothes and inform the boss that he was quitting. He had only two dollars in his pocket. When he arrived at his hotel, he found a telegram from his mother waiting for him. In it was a money order for \$20.00 and a plea for his return!

But when he reached Memphis, he was still drinking. He didn't know how to locate his folks. As he spent the next few days in the city, a heavy loneliness settled upon him. He drank, drank and drank to shake the feeling, but it persisted. He couldn't sleep. He was so restless that he couldn't stay in one place. Walking up and down Main Street at one o'clock that morning, he had seen the light burning in the Mission office. He started in several times, then hesitated. Finally he went in and made his way to the office.

Jimmy listened to his long story. At times it was incoherent and hard to piece together. When he was through, Jimmy asked him if he *really* wanted to conquer his weakness and be a man again. Tears filled his eyes. When Jimmy asked him to pray, he did. Jimmy talked to him for more than an hour before he was assured that he knew what he was doing. When they rose from their knees after praying, he told Jimmy that he felt he had thrown himself on the saving grace of Jesus Christ and felt and knew that he was a different man.

"I know," he said, "that my mother's prayers have been answered just now."

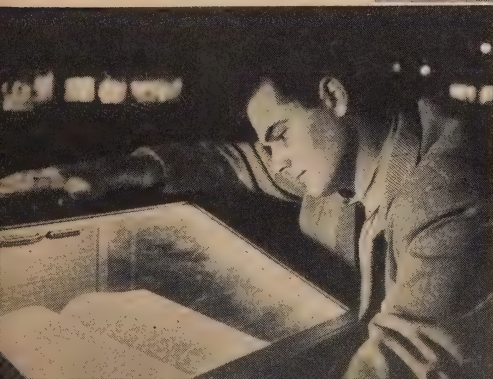
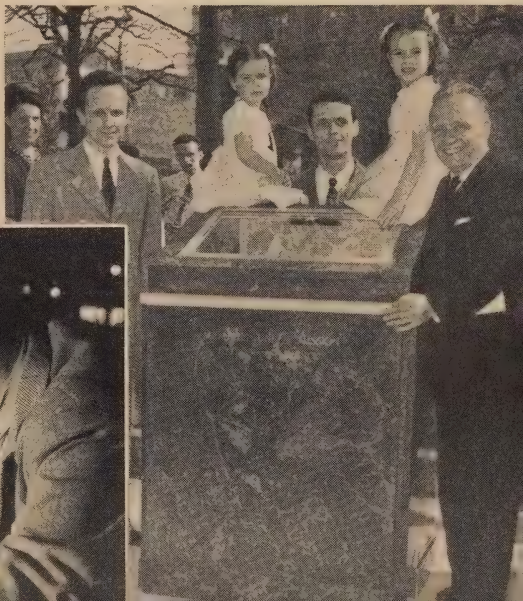
The beds in the Mission were not yet ready for occupancy so Jimmy got a hotel room for him. As he left him at the elevator, Jimmy told him not to leave his room until he got there the next morning and they would have breakfast together.

"If he stays there that long," Jimmy thought, "it'll be proof of his sincerity and determination."



Directors of the Memphis Union Mission took a big step of faith and purchased a \$50,000 piece of ground to build America's first Youth Evangelistic Auditorium. With only \$15,000 in sight this prayer meeting was held on the site. God supplied the entire balance of over \$30,000 within 30 days time. The architect's sketch shows the proposed auditorium which will be completely equipped for television, radio and recreational facilities, and 1500 seats.

The late Dr. Walter Maier of the Lutheran Hour dedicated the Bible Case Stand erected in Court Square, Memphis, Tenn., April 6, 1948. This is America's first Bible in a public square. It is maintained by the Mission and a leaf turned every day by a staff worker.



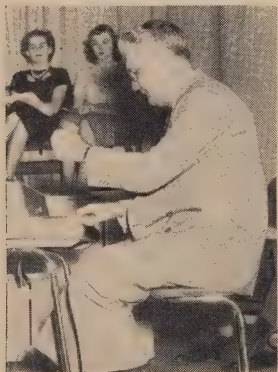




Top row: (left) Dr. Bob Jones Jr., Jimmy Stroud and T. Walker Lewis, president of the Memphis Union Mission; (right) Jimmy Stroud and Dr. Charles E. Fuller, of the Old Fashioned Revival Hour.



Huge outdoor signboard which advertises the annual conference at MUM.



Lee Baum, associate director of the Youth rallies.

(Right) Mrs. Verla Pettit, capable Bible teacher and secretary-book-keeper of the Memphis Union Mission.



Mrs. Jimmy Stroud with the three Stroud boys—James Andrew, Thomas Ramar and Paul Markham.





Jim opened the door when Jimmy knocked on it the next morning. His first remark was that he remembered everything he had done the night before. Even more apparent were the effects of five months of continuous drinking. But Jimmy could sense that here was a new born babe in Christ.

After a shower, breakfast and a visit to the barber shop, Jim went along to the Mission office where he gave his first public testimony to the employees. Then he asked Jimmy to go home with him to his aging mother. As they reached the home of that godly mother who prayed so long for a wandering boy, she burst into tears as she told of the long hours of intercession in his behalf. In spite of her faith she had begun to think that she would not see him converted in her life time. Now her happiness was beyond measure.

Jimmy helped Jim to get a job in a dairy on the edge of town. Shortly after he asked Jimmy if the Mission would help him locate his wife and two children. He wondered in his mind if they would want to see him. He had mistreated them all badly. The children would hide when they saw him coming. His wife had mis-led him as to their whereabouts because of fear of what would happen if he found them. He had reason to believe, however, that they were not far away on a farm in Arkansas. Knowing that his wife would not let him get close enough to talk to her if he came alone, he asked Jimmy to go along.

The two men inquired at a number of places and finally were directed to a shack in a cotton field. No one was at the place when they walked up, but Jim recognized some of the household belongings. By standing on a swing on the porch, he saw his wife and two girls picking cotton out across the field. They went back to the car and drove around the field to where they were picking. Jim leaped out of the car to greet his family. His wife sank back on a long cotton sack, fear gripping her heart. One of the girls cowered behind her mother for protection.

As Jim tried to explain that God had made a new man out of him, Jimmy stepped forward to assure her that it was true. But before Jimmy could say many words, she stopped him, and said,

"You don't have to tell me. I can see the difference now."

A happy, re-united family accompanied Jimmy back to Memphis that afternoon. They were coming back to a new job, a new home and a new life of real happiness. That night Jim and his wife came forward at the Mission altar and dedicated themselves to be Christian parents, to maintain a family altar and to teach their children to read the Bible and pray. As Jimmy said that night as he saw that couple together.

"Truly the Lord is long suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Pet. 3:9).

\* \* \*

Casey left the Aleutian islands in March, 1945. He arrived in Seattle, Wash., a few days later with a pocketful of money and . . . dead drunk. A master diver with the army engineers, he had done a solid piece of work during the war. Now he was discharged, with plenty of money. A few days later he was "poured off" a train in Aberdeen, S. D. He was still in a mushy state when he reached St. Louis in June. He had no ambition to do anything; all he wanted to do was forget the past, with its many headache hangovers.

He wandered aimlessly in the Dakotas, Illinois and Missouri for the next two months. When he arrived in Memphis in October, 1945, he had learned that you can't drown your sorrows. He was dead broke, too.

A new bridge was being built across the Mississippi and divers were needed so he obtained a job. He had been in Memphis only a few days when something prompted him to come to the Mission. He told Jimmy his story, and Jimmy agreed to help him. Each man who comes to the Mission is

dealt with to fit his peculiar needs. Casey needed money for the weekend. Jimmy gave him some, and told him of the nightly services.

A week later Casey stood up in the Mission and said,

"I was very much surprised to find anyone sufficiently interested in me to pick me up, show me where I was going and the quickest way to the right road. From Saturday through Monday I wondered why anyone would think I was worth praying for. I could only conclude that Someone must have been taking care of me in my hazardous occupation. All of the time I was unconcerned as to who it was, or why. Mr. Stroud went to considerable pains to show me, and on Monday night I went to the altar and accepted that which was freely given. Today I'm extremely happy to let everyone know what Christ has done in my life."

Casey's wife had divorced him in 1941. He had given up all hopes of ever being reconciled to her. Now as he looked back on his marriage from a Christ-given viewpoint, he accepted the responsibility for the marriage having gone on the rocks and started to get in touch with her. He wrote to a school in Arkansas where he thought his daughter was enrolled. She was no longer there, but her clothes had been sent to a place in Mobile, Alabama. Casey reached his wife there and told her of the change in his life. She responded and made immediate plans to come to Memphis. As Casey left the Mission he told Jimmy,

"My hope and prayer is that I can persuade my wife and daughter to take the step I've taken and become followers of Christ."

Mission superintendents perhaps know as no one else the curse of liquor and what it does to a man. The so-called "men of distinction" of liquor advertising often wind up on skid rows around the world after having switched from this liquor to that liquor. The men in the grip of this hellish habit form the greatest group needing help from missions.

To many people, these men are "just some more drunks."  
To men in missions, they are men with souls.

George arrived in Memphis at the end of the war to negotiate a deal for a reconversion product in which a friend was interested. He had lived in Memphis for 25 years; his father had once headed a company of no small size. As the family fortune dwindled away, the father and mother moved to North Carolina. George knew lumbering and for a number of years served as a broker in buying and re-selling it to the government. It was on this type of business that he was back in Memphis.

He was 39, and had been drinking from early youth. His habits had wrecked his career and caused the family much grief as well as thousands of dollars in cures. As soon as he reached Memphis he went on a drunk which lasted for weeks. He ran out of money, but was able to use his family reputation to borrow more from friends and banks.

This went on for weeks, George getting worse and worse. Several hotels forced him out because of unpaid bills and drinking. He forgot about writing to his family. They soon became desperately concerned.

A few days before Thanksgiving a friend brought George to the Mission service. Something brought him back, and the group put him on their prayer list. Several days later he came to the Mission in great trouble. He had hired a taxi to run about town to borrow money to pay his hotel bill as well as his taxi fare. He had only a few pennies left as he told Jimmy, "I've come to the end of my rope."

Jimmy paid his cab fare of \$12.00. As they walked back into the Mission, George asked him if he could stay there awhile and get some help.

The upstairs of the Mission was not yet finished, the beds were not in and the painting was still in progress. There was one little cot in a dusty, unfinished room to which he would be welcome. He seemed grateful for that.



He spent the next two nights at the Mission, drinking moderately around town in the daytime. The next day was Thanksgiving, and Jimmy talked to George until midnight, reading God's Word and praying with him. It was easy to see that the Holy Spirit was working in his heart. That evening he learned to pray.

The next morning he knocked on Jimmy's door just across the hall from his. He seemed desperate and anxious to talk to him. Jimmy went to his room and found him sitting on the edge of the bed, shaken nervously and almost broken physically.

"I have two things to tell you, Jimmy," he began. "One will make you sad, the other will make you glad. First, I want to confess that I have brought liquor into the Mission. It's over there in that suitcase on the floor. I'm sorry about it. Open the suitcase and get rid of it."

Tears coursed down his cheeks as he looked at Jimmy and went on,

"I saw God last night. He has forgiven me all my sins and cleansed my heart and soul. I not only believe in Christ now but I trust Him to save me."

Although his mind was ravaged by drink, it was clear. He told Jimmy he hadn't slept all night. He had prayed. Suddenly it was as though a veil had been lifted. His sins rolled by him like pictures on a screen and George catalogued them in his mind.

Like most drunks, George had not been eating properly for weeks. When the stimulus from liquor was gone, he became violently sick. His body was torn with a pain as he strained in repeated, futile attempts to vomit. After much racking agony he yielded up the poison that was in his system.

Then he relaxed and rested quietly. He told Jimmy that God had cleansed his heart and soul and now was doing the same thing to his body. He insisted that Jimmy smell his breath; there was no trace of alcohol. An hour later, how-

ever, his condition had grown so much worse that he was removed to a hospital. He remained there four days for treatment.

In the meantime, his mother and father had become frantic at not hearing from him. They wrote to Alcoholics Anonymous in New York City, which referred them to the Memphis branch. The Memphis office informed them that he was in a hotel in poor shape physically and financially. They advised that some member of the family come to Memphis to care for him. All of this happened before George came to the Mission. When he was dismissed from the hospital, he was informed that his father was coming to Memphis.

Back at the Mission, George called his home in North Carolina. His mother answered, and George told her how Jesus had come into his life. She cried even as she thanked God. She said that his father was expecting to find his son in the gutter, in jail, or in the hospital.

When his father stepped off the train the next day, however, George was there to meet him. The man could hardly believe his eyes when he saw his boy well-dressed and in good mental and physical shape. In the Mission office he could only sit and look at his son. It was easy to see that he was grateful, but that he could not understand the power that had transformed his son so completely and so quickly. He had had nothing to do with church in his lifetime, and George had followed in his footsteps.

George stayed on at the Mission and the father went to a hotel. The next day the father told Jimmy that he had dreamed that he had found George all straightened out, but that it couldn't be true. It was more than a half hour after he awoke that he convinced himself that his son was all right.

George told his father in great detail of his conversion. The elderly man started to attend the chapel services and in one of them heard his son give a public testimony. One day he said to Jimmy,

"Jimmy, I've never made any sort of public confession of faith, but I've tried to live by the Golden Rule and treat everybody right."

Jimmy reminded him that the Golden Rule ends when a person lies down to die and that Christ is the only continuing hope. He replied that he had told his son that if Jimmy had a church he would join it in a minute. Jimmy answered,

"I'd rather see you accept Christ and unite with the church of your choice."

Nothing further happened at that time.

George was busy making restitution to people he had wronged. One man who had guaranteed a check for him was about to put the matter in the hands of the law when George walked in. His visit was a spiritual tonic to everyone in the office. The man had tears in his eyes when he told George as he left,

"George, don't let that check bother you. Pay it when you can."

With every such experience, George went up the spiritual ladder another rung.

A few nights later George's father gave his heart to Christ in the Mission chapel. At the invitation that night it was a thrill to see this stately, well-groomed, cultured man of 72 leave his seat alongside his son and walk down the aisle to kneel and accept Christ. He gave testimony immediately, adding his thanks to God for saving his son, too. He soon returned home and since has written regularly to the Mission of the blessings God has showered into his heart. He joined the First Presbyterian church in Wilmington, North Carolina, and is active there today.

\* \* \*

Some of you may wonder,

"Do the converts all hold true? Do they quit their drinking and loose living? Is everything always cleaned up?"

Any mission worker will tell you that converts occasion-

ally fall back into their old habits. Who can forget the battle which Mel Trotter had with the liquor habit after he was converted, but God gradually gave him victory. George Brown slipped back a bit into his former habits. Jimmy is assured that he definitely had an experience with Christ, but that he did not allow the Holy Spirit to lead him into all the truth. Jimmy is looking forward to the day when George will answer God's invitation found in I John 1:9,

"If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Each year thousands of rural young people move into the cities of our country. Children of large farm families often find that there is not enough work to do on the farm and so will travel to a nearby city to work.

Ethel Kirk was in that position. She was the oldest of eight children in a family living at Cedar Creek, Tennessee. She left home in the summer of 1945 to come to Memphis to find work. At home she attended the infrequent church services in her community, but had found them uninteresting. She never joined the church, nor made any profession of faith in Christ though she lived a righteous life. In all of her life only one person had spoken to her about Christ.

She by-passed church services in Memphis, spending her leisure hours enjoying her freedom from home and its discipline. In seven months she went to church twice, and then only as a social courtesy to friends who invited her. Her freedom, however, soon became appalling. Friends proved to be temporary, and soon drifted away. Nothing seemed to go just right. She acquired an emptiness, a loneliness and an aimlessness which disturbed her. She sought for something but did not know what it was. She attended the movies constantly to escape boredom and unrest. Such friends as remained true to her centered their life in the church. She felt out of place there.



In November, 1945, she first heard of Youth for Christ, but was not particularly interested. Then she saw a picture writeup in the Memphis *Commercial Appeal* concerning the rally. She was attracted by the happy looks in the faces of the young people in the pictures. Her friends invited her to a rally, and she accepted. Mervin Rosell was the speaker that night. The program sparkled. She had never seen or heard anything like it before. Her heart yearned to be able to give the kind of testimonies she heard that night. When the invitation was given, she realized that such an experience could be hers if she wanted it. She realized she was going the wrong way, leaving God completely out of the picture. But she didn't do anything about it that night.

The next few Saturday nights found her working at her job as a long distance operator for the phone company. During those weeks she resolved that if opportunity ever came again to attend a rally that she would go and give her heart to Christ.

On her next free Saturday night, however, she was invited by friends to attend a Christmas music program at the city auditorium. She remembered her decision to go to Youth for Christ, but decided to postpone it for a week when her friends persisted in her going with them.

However, God spoke to her even while she was making that decision. So strongly did she feel His presence that she abruptly excused herself and went all alone to the Character Builders Hall where the rally was to be held.

When the invitation was given, she lost no time. She went forward immediately. Her confident step and her glowing face left no doubt as to her sincerity.

The change in her life was immediate and unusually noticeable. She took every opportunity to go to church, and placed her membership in the Kennedy Memorial Baptist Church after visiting a number of congregations. Previously, she had had to work almost every Sunday. For the next six

Sundays she was free. Even the girls on the switchboards couldn't explain how it happened. She lost all interest in the movies, a thing which had become almost an obsession. The first time she went she lost four dollars. The next time she got a bad headache. So she stopped going, devoting her time to much better things.

She had a little feeling in her mind that God had something special for her to do. When the summer of 1946 came along she had nothing definitely planned for her vacation because she did not know when it would come. When she was informed that her vacation time was there, she scouted around for something to do. A lady was just leaving for the Winona Lake, Indiana, Bible Conference and asked Ethel if she cared to go along. In a few hours she was on her way.

That week proved to be a life-changing week. On Saturday night, Dr. Paul W. Rood spoke on "Flaming Youth or Youth Aflame." It was decision night again for Ethel Kirk. Her life was yielded completely to Christ. Before she walked out of the Billy Sunday Tabernacle that night she felt in her heart that God was calling her to be a full-time Christian worker and possibly a missionary to . . . CHINA!

She could get into school that fall, but later enrolled at the Southland Bible Institute in Pikeville, Kentucky. There she met Arnold Cook, a ministerial student, to whom she was married on December 31, 1949. The man who gave her away at the wedding was none other than our own Jimmy Stroud. Today her husband is the assistant pastor at the Whiteville Baptist Church in Whiteville, West Virginia, as they continue to serve while seeking God's will for the future.

\* \* \*

Newspapers occasionally carry stories these days of parents taking their children into taverns with them and even giving them liquor to drink. Mary Evelyn was one of these unfortunate children. She was drunk for the first time in her life when only six years of age. Her father even before

that would take a bottle cap, fill it with liquor, and let his daughter sip it out. When Mary Evelyn was 15 she was a heavy drinker.

At 17 she was married for the first time. At 19 she was divorced and decided to join the WACS. She stayed in the service for a year, and at 20 was out and re-married. Her second husband was a college professor whose home she broke up in order to marry him. Both of them were heavy drinkers. Mary Evelyn would "pass out" after a certain number of drinks. One night she started on a drinking bout in Seattle, Washington. When she woke up she was in Los Angeles, California. On other occasions she would find herself in parking lots, or in strange rooms. Her legs were cut in several places from kicking out store windows during her drunken sprees. She and her husband ordered liquor by the case.

She obtained a divorce from her second husband and went to California to meet her third husband and marry him. She doesn't recall in any detail the entire marriage ceremony as liquor had such control of her at the time. Their honeymoon was a six-week drunk. He put her in a sanitarium to see if she could be cured of her drinking. She left the sanitarium and her husband at the same time, coming home to stay with a mother who was a praying, burdened, lady. Mary Evelyn's father also was a drinker, and his daughter was following in his steps.

One night she headed for the river to end it all. Life had become too distasteful to her. She couldn't face things anymore. She obtained a razor and cut herself 10 times on her arm. Police found her unconscious on the sidewalk and rushed her to a hospital where she recovered even though she had lost a great deal of blood.

But liquor was still her master and she its slave. Not long late she was picked up again on the streets, bleeding profusely from four severe razor gashes in her wrist. How she lived through that experience is hard to explain, but

after a long stay in the hospital she was released in good health.

Later she was committed for the third time to a mental institution. By this time she had tried just about everything in being cured from her drinking, but all to no avail. After leaving the mental home, she soon found herself in the Memphis jail on a drunk charge. While on that last drunk she had fallen and broken two of her toes.

Two days before Christmas a social worker called the Mission and talked to Mrs. Pettit. A girl in the jail, she said, had asked her to call the Mission, and see if someone could stop over to see her in the next few days. Two busy days at the Mission kept Mrs. Pettit from going to the jail before Christmas day. That morning she visited the Penal Farm, a girl in the hospital and then went to see Mary Evelyn.

Christmas in jail is not the most pleasant place in the world. The girls behind the bars that day were angry. There had been several arguments and disturbances. The peace which the Christ child had come to bring had not seeped through to the people in that jail. Mary Evelyn was not her most pleasant self, either.

Mrs. Pettit talked to her for more than two hours. Mary Evelyn said she had dabbled in just about everything as far as religion was concerned, but nothing had helped her. She told Mrs. Pettit,

"I must have something. Can you help me?"

Mrs. Pettit opened to her the Word of God, starting with Isaiah 53. She made her realize what the Bible had to say on the subject of sin and her need of Christ. She made it clear that everyone must either accept or reject Christ.

"Now, Mary Evelyn, will you accept or reject Christ?" Mrs. Pettit asked her.

"I won't reject Him," she replied.

"But will you accept Him?" Mrs. Pettit asked again.

"I won't reject him," she repeated.



"It must be one or the other," Mrs. Pettit explained. They prayed together at length, and then Mrs. Pettit left. She left with Mary Evelyn her own New Testament and asked her to read the Gospel of John. The next day she called Mrs. Pettit and asked her to come to see her again. She was full of questions, and Mrs. Pettit had the answers.

Yet, she would make no decision to accept Christ while Mrs. Pettit was there. Just after she left, however, God did a work in the heart of this sinful young girl of 26 and washed her sins away in the blood of Christ. She stayed in jail for three more days and then was released to the custody of the Mission. She attended the chapel services and on her first night there walked down the aisle to make a profession of faith in Christ. She stays awake for long hours through the night in reading the Bible. It has become a storehouse of spiritual food for her. As this is being written the Mission is serving as her home and stabilizing influence as she tries to put together the pieces of a shattered life.

\* \* \*

Physical tragedy during youth is hard to explain. Youth is a time of health, of robust living, of joy, of the beginning of new homes and the heart warmth or romance. When tragedy comes, most people are unprepared for it.

John and Rosie Lee lived on a small farm in Mercer, Tennessee. They married young and in due time had a sweet little baby girl in their home. Two years later the little girl was to have a brother or sister.

One day Rosie Lee had a toothache which caused her entire body to ache. The doctor's diagnosis sent her to the hospital immediately with a bad throat infection. At John Gaston hospital her second child was born a few days later. But the happiness about the new arrival was tempered when doctors discovered that Rosie Lee had tuberculosis and had to be moved to the Oakville Memorial Sanitarium.

John found a room at 266 Adams, near the Mission. One night he walked by the chapel, heard the singing and decided to go in. His heart was heavy. That same afternoon he had been informed by the doctors that his wife could not possibly live. It was Monday night and the young people's Bible class was meeting in the Chapel. John was impressed by the testimonies and prayers of the young people before the lesson by Mrs. Pettit. After the lesson, Mrs. Pettit felt that there were unconverted people in the audience and asked if anyone wished to be converted. Three hands went up immediately. One of them was John's. When the group stood for the final song and the invitation was given, he walked to the front and knelt in prayer. He was soundly converted. As he left the Mission that night he told Jimmy and Mrs. Pettit of his wife's condition and asked if someone from the Mission might visit her the next day.

When Mrs. Herbert Blagg entered her room the next day she saw a pale, weak girl whose voice was only a whisper. She lost no time in talking to Rosie Lee. She asked John to tell his sweetheart what Christ had done for him the night before. He told her,

"Jesus saved me last night. I wouldn't take anything in the world for what He has done for me."

Rosie Lee whispered into Mrs. Blagg's ear,

"I'd like to be a Christian, too."

Mrs. Blagg opened up to her the way of salvation. The Holy Spirit revealed the things of Christ to her. Tears filled her eyes as she confessed Christ as her Saviour. She prayed a prayer of thanks to God for saving her. John's warm embrace showed his unashamed joy at her decision.

Two weeks later Rosie Lee died. Two hours before she went home to heaven she called her drunkard father to her bedside and said to him,

"Daddy, I wish you'd give your heart to Jesus and let Him cleanse you and save you, too."

She asked him to pray. He tried to pray through stumbling lips which knew not such words.

Two days later, Rosie Lee was buried.

But God proved faithful.

The night of the funeral day when the invitation was given at the Mission chapel a bent, broken, tired-looking man made his way to the altar. He gave his heart to the Lord and in his testimony told how his dying daughter in her last conscious hours had pleaded with him about his lost condition.

He was Rosie Lee's father.

\* \* \*

The Christian life, wonderful as it is, is not always lined on both sides with roses. Problems of everyday living rise up to disturb even though the truth always holds that all things work together for good.

How would you have reacted, for example, had you been Andy?

Jimmy looked up from his desk one day to see a young man, his eyes swollen from crying, standing in the doorway. Jimmy gave him a friendly smile and a cheery greeting. Andy was far from able to return the greeting. He handed Jimmy a crumpled envelope, torn open at one end. Then he buried his head in his hands. His body alternately shook and became rigid as sobs filled the room. Jimmy read the note,

Andy, am leaving. It has been a long time since I loved you. I found that out right after I married you and I am not coming back and don't try to follow me as it will do no good. Here's hoping you the best of everything.

Clara

Jimmy looked at a man whose world had crumbled at his feet. For seven years he had loved his wife and her child by another marriage. This was the appreciation he was receiving for years of sacrifice in their behalf. The rooms in his home were barren. She had not even left a towel. All

that remained behind was the above note, containing the dearest thing known to man—a dead love.

After he had quieted down, Andy told Jimmy the following story.

"I went to work this morning after walking all night. My first thought was that I should get myself caught in the machinery at work and be killed. That would have settled everything. But, I'm a Christian. I love the Lord and I know that He loves me. I couldn't do that.

"I pass your place here every morning on the way to work. I've read so often that sign about not having a friend in the world and finding one here. All morning long I saw that sign in front of me. I finally asked the boss if I could have the rest of the day off. I came straight here."

Together, they opened the Word, read it, and talked it over. The promises of God became more real to Andy in those moments. He read how God had promised that He would provide a way of escape out of any temptation. He was comforted in his heart as Jimmy led him through the many experiences Christ went through for us.

Andy was learning that the way of the transgressor is hard. He had been unequally yoked together with an unbeliever. Andy had grown cold in his spiritual life because Clara had refused to go to church. He himself was not being used of God. As they knelt to pray, he cried from a broken heart,

"Oh God, from this day on you will come first in my life."

Strengthened spiritually, mentally and physically, Andy left the Mission with a smile of victory on his lips. There was one love he could never lose—the love of Jesus Christ, his Lord.

\* \* \*

The unwed girl was pregnant.

Sin was reaping what had been sown. She came into the Mission and was taken care of in the girls' shelter. Her



thoughts were bitter as she thought of her past, present and future. She did not even know who had fathered the baby which was to be hers.

One day Mrs. Pettit found a little note on her desk at the Mission. It read,

"Would you take my baby after it is born?"

The crying, aching heart of a young mother-to-be had seen in the life of one of the Mission workers the type of a home she would want her baby brought up in. But it was impossible to grant this request.

The baby was born, a cute and healthy little child. For a year the mother stayed at the Mission. She took care of her baby, worked at the Mission occasionally in answering the phone and giving out the Word of God to those who had called in on the telephone ministry.

Along the way, Christ came into her heart.

• • •

Sid Allen can tell you his own story.

"All through history, both Biblical and profane, 'landmarks' play an important role. Many still stand today. In many cases, the landmark has taken on more importance than the event which happened there. They point in two directions—the past and the future.

"I was born in Flemington, Florida, but moved to Nashville, Tennessee, at the age of five. This is my home until this present day. My father was a Presbyterian preacher until he died at 85; my mother is still living. Early in my Christian life I became discouraged; in trying to justify my conduct, I went down in a hurry.

"Then came the most vivid, concrete and ever-to-be remembered landmark in my life—the Memphis Union Mission. At the Mission, new life, hope and ambitions were re-kindled, a lamp re-lit that will burn forever and an 'X' marking the spot that will never be erased for time and eternity.

"For it was here that God gave me my great second chance to prove His love toward me. It was here that I re-dedicated my life to full-time Christian service. The door of the Mission swung open for the door of opportunity. Here I began to plan, pray and study in earnest. Here I saw Christianity at work more clearly than I had ever seen it before. I began to plan, pray and study in earnest. Here I saw Christ-through me. The future today is realistic and bright. God bless the Memphis Union Mission! Long may she stand in the land of the free, and the home of the brave!"

Today, Sid Allen is one of the key workers at the Mission. It was on a Christmas Eve that Sid Allen went into Jimmy Stroud's office, closed the door, and made a long distance call to tell his mother of a decision he had made only a few minutes before.

• • •

Bob had been spoiled.

His mother and father were well-to-do business people in Sunflower county, Mississippi. An only child, he was sent off to military academy because his folks wanted to get him off of their hands. There, at 14, he had his first drink of liquor. His parents sent him everything he asked for. They were both tops in business and made a great deal of money. But, the greed of money was too much for them and his mother ended up in a mental institution.

From 14 to 25 Bob was a social drinker, but then it got the best of him. He went to his first sanitarium when he was 27. During the next years he went through every sanitarium in Arkansas, Tennessee and Mississippi. He took every kind of cure known for alcoholism. He would become sober, be built up physically, but as soon as he was released he went right at it again. His wife also became an alcoholic and went through three cures and got control of herself. Bob himself just never thought of staying sober. Only one person

in all his life spoke to him about Jesus Christ, and that was a lady in one of the sanitariums.

On one of his drunks he went into the Mission. He wasn't converted that night. He stayed there for a week, going to noon prayer meeting and the chapel service each day and night as he helped in the shop. Mrs. Pettit especially believed in Bob and that he would come through. Bob himself couldn't get away from the sincerity of the preachers who spoke from night to night.

One night as he lay in bed he accepted Christ as his Saviour. It was 2 a.m. when he made his decision. He could not understand it all, but he said to God,

"Take me as I am, not as I understand."

Since that early morning meeting with God he has truly grown in grace. Well-educated, with as much money as he has needed, he worked around the shop for a number of days for nothing.

• • •

It took four men to get Hank into the Mission and then on into bed.

While visiting a friend in Memphis, he had gotten himself drunk before going to the friend's home. Jimmy was sitting in his office when the friend called and asked if the Mission wouldn't come and take Hank off of his hands. Hank didn't want to leave. When he got to the Mission, he didn't want to stay. He was in the midst of a 47-day drinking spree and he didn't plan to stop.

Born of Christian parents in Rochester, New York, he spent the first years of his life in New York City and Chicago. During World War II he saw much action with the marines in the South Pacific. When the fighting was over he returned to his job as bartender in Club 47 in Chicago's Skid Row.

His wife left him because of his drinking and he came to Memphis to find her. He obtained a job, but was fired

for drinking. Things went from bad to worse as he kept on drinking in order to forget the past. It was on Thanksgiving Day that he was brought to the Mission.

Too hard for God?

No, God met him in one of the chapel services one night and Hank accepted Christ as his Saviour. It so happened that most of the Mission workers were present at that meeting and so witnessed the "great transaction." As one of the converts in describing the occasion, said, "The Last Stop Station, Terminus Inn, Heaven's Incubator, the Regeneration Mill, Down to Earth Pottery, or whatever you want to call our Mission, did eternal work tonight."

Shortly thereafter Hank received a telegram from his former boss in Chicago, asking him to come back to work. He had looked for a job in Memphis and found none. His wife had sued for divorce and been granted it. He brought the telegram to the Mission and showed it to Mrs. Pettit. She told him to go down to the chapel, lay the telegram on the altar, pray about it, and let her know the answer.

Five minutes later he called up the stairs,

"The answer is No!"

Hank lived at the Mission for seven months. Day by day the Mission workers saw a new man being developed. Old things were passing away. Jimmy got him his old job back. Today the owner says that Hank is the best employee he ever has had.

One night Hank did something he had been planning to do for a long time. With the prayers of the Mission force behind him he went out to visit his divorced wife. He wondered in his mind what would happen.

God had gone before and paved the way. Not only were they reconciled, but Hank had the privilege of leading her to Christ. A week later they were re-married in the Mission chapel. Today they have a darling baby girl in their home,



a home in which both of them are diligently studying the Word of God.

From Rochester came a letter from Hank's stepmother, a Jewish lady who had become a Christian seventeen years before. Her right side had been paralyzed by a stroke, but in her left-handed scrawl she thanked the Mission for what it had done for Hank.

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The troubled voice on the other end of the phone was filled with anger and disappointment. Jimmy listened, and heard,

"Jimmy, I want you to pray for my husband again. I've gone about as far as I can. I don't know what to do."

Marital discord is so prevalent in our modern day. Much of it has found its way to the ears and eyes of Jimmy Stroud. This was another case. She told Jimmy that drink had so gripped her husband that he was about to lose his job at one of the big concerns in Memphis. Not only lose his job, but his family.

With a prayer on his lips, Jimmy headed for the factory.

The place was full of customers, so he had no chance to talk to Doug privately. He introduced himself and asked if he could step outside for just a moment. Jimmy went right to the point, told him why he was there, then paused alongside that noisy street and prayed for Doug. It was so noisy that he had to place his face almost into Doug's hair in order to be heard. Then he asked Doug to stop by the Mission and see him.

He was half drunk when he came that afternoon. They talked a good deal more and had prayer together. Doug apparently made no decision, but Jimmy as usual left that with the Lord.

Several days later Jimmy again picked up the phone. It was 11 o'clock at night. The same excited and worried voice was on the phone, saying,

"Jimmy, I've done it. I took your advice and called the police . . . and Doug is in jail. Now let me say just one more thing to you—don't ever ask me to live with that man again!"

When court convened the next morning, Jimmy was there.

There was no wife, no brother, no friend except Jimmy. Jimmy asked Judge Sellers if he could take him to the Mission. Judge Sellers granted it, and they walked out together. Days passed into weeks as Doug remained at the Mission. Things had not changed any at home, as far as Doug was concerned, but something had happened in his heart. He was a new man in Christ Jesus.

And he was trusting God to straighten out everything as He wanted it straightened out!

One day Jimmy walked into the Mission and almost bumped into Doug going down the stairs. He had his hat in his hand. His packed suitcase was on the first floor. He told Jimmy excitedly,

"I'm going home for dinner, and I think I'll be allowed to stay."

At least he had enough faith to believe that he should pack his clothes! He was as happy as a boy with a new toy.

The Lord once again had gone before and paved the way. Prayer was answered. His home was re-established. Today he is the head of a department in one of the largest construction companies in Memphis. Each Sunday together with his wife and little son, who has found a new champion in his dad, they find their place in the house of God where they faithfully serve the Lord.

Jimmy can't forget Doug, even for a day, because as a love gift to the Mission he sent a crew of his men to the Mission to lay asphalt tile all over the dining room, corridor and telephone room.

Through the years, that floor will tell the story of God's saving grace.

Many well-educated men populate the skid rows of our nation. Memphis has had its share of them. Bob was one.

He worked in the Mission neighborhood and as such often heard men testify that God had changed their lives at the Mission. He scoffed inwardly, even as he noticed that their lives had changed.

One night he, too, stepped into the Mission. He had lost his job only a few days before because of drinking, and he was full of it tonight. As he sobered up during the meeting, he realized that his college education and his degree in pharmacy meant nothing. He needed something the world could not offer.

After staying at the Mission for a few days, he began to change. The 16-day campaign was on and so he attended all of the meetings. For the first time, the gospel hit him right between the eyes. That night in the prayer room he made his decision.

The next day he was a different man. He swept and polished the floors, scrubbed the showers, answered the phone or did anything else anyone asked him to do.

He was far from the place he had been in before.

But, he had Christ now.

\* \* \*

It is not seldom that temptations confront Christians and cause them to fall into sin. One thing may lead to another. Before you know it, a man's address may be "Skid Row."

Everett Harris was in that spot. He was brought up in a fine Christian home in Mississippi. At 15 he was converted in a little Baptist church. He was active in the young people's society and Sunday school until he quit school in the tenth grade and started to work for his father.

He was an artist as well as musician. For a period after coming to Memphis he did architectural drawing. Later he was in the building business. He organized a dance band, playing the saxophone and clarinet himself. Commercial art

was next, forgetting the music. For 10 years in Memphis he worked for sign shops all through the city, losing a job in just about every one of them.

When he was 30 he got back into fellowship with God and transferred his church membership to Memphis. For a year he sang in the choir and was active in church. One of his former employers with whom he had caroused quite a bit gave him his job back. Before he knew it he was back in the drinking slough again. At 35 he would go on drinking bouts which would last for a week or a month. He wound up in the hospital many times, often near death. His parents had moved to Memphis. Because he stayed with them, they naturally were concerned about his bad habits.

One day Jimmy Stroud came into the sign shop where Everett was working. They became acquainted. Soon it ripened into friendship. Jimmy thus learned of Everett's drinking. For two years prayed regularly for him.

When one of Everett's spree landed him in jail, the judge turned him over to the Mission rather than send him to the Penal Farm. Everett lived at the Mission, his mother and father approving. It was not long before he found his Lord near and dear to him again and has grown richly in the things which count in this life. He has gone into the pulpit on many occasions to illustrate sermons or songs with beautiful paintings. In his little art shop he does work for firms, individuals, and churches. The profits go back into the Mission work.

Everett Harris today is a welcome, well-adjusted member of the Mission family.

\* \* \*

Not all men are on Skid Row because of liquor.

William Crofoot was there, and he didn't touch the stuff. Grief and loneliness had driven him there.

He was a successful business man in Long Beach, San Diego and Santa Barbara, California, specializing in air-



conditioning equipment. His wife died at the age of 31, leaving him with a six-year-old son.

On October 9, 1944, Bob Crofoot was killed in action in one of the Philippine Islands. He was 20 at the time. He had gone to Sunday school and church and was a fine Christian lad.

Crofoot liquidated his business, then started to roam. He had plenty of money, but he was lonesome and sad. When he got to Florida one time, he met a lady whom he had known before and they renewed their acquaintance. She was divorced and her two children were married and living in Arkansas. Doctors had advised her to give up her beauty shop and go to Florida because of an arthritic condition.

They were married. As the money started to dwindle away, he decided to find a job, but couldn't. He thought it was because of his clothes, so he bought a new suit. But, still no job.

He became cynical and mean. As he would drive along the highways and see hitch-hikers he would deliberately steer his car right at them to force them off the road. He sent his wife back to Arkansas and he came to Memphis. When he arrived it was raining and he got soaking wet. Someone at the bus depot said,

"Why not stop over at the Memphis Union Mission. They'll help you out."

That night he went to the Ellis Auditorium to hear Jimmy Johnson preach during the 16-day campaign. His message fitted Crofoot like a glove as he spoke on "Pomp and Circumstances." He knew that night that he needed Christ, but he waited for five nights before he did anything about it. He knew it meant a complete change. Was he willing to go through with it? Didn't he know that his wife was not a Christian?

But God broke down all of his excuses. The night that William Crofoot walked down to the prayer room, God

washed all of the meanness out of him as He redeemed his soul. He became one of the sweetest Christians the Mission has ever encountered.

He went back to Arkansas to tell his wife what had happened. Three weeks after he returned, she came to Memphis. One night she was carried into the chapel meeting. You can guess the result. Yes, she, too, accepted Christ as her Saviour.

Today, they are a happy couple. They don't have everything in a material way, but they have a mutual love for each other which has been cemented by a love for Jesus Christ. They live in an apartment behind the girls' shelter, thrilled with what God has done for them.

\* \* \*

When neighbors start to wonder what is going on in your house, something is very likely to be wrong.

That happened in Louis' home. The well-meaning neighbors were not concerned about him beating his wife. He was living there alone. But he persisted in coming home drunk all hours of the day and night. Finally a Christian lady stopped to see him and asked him if he wouldn't stop at the Memphis Union Mission.

A month before he had taken his wife to Florida for a vacation. But instead of a good time, they ended up fighting. Filled with jealousy, he started to drink. One afternoon he threw the keys to the car at his wife, tossed her some money, walked out of the vacation spot and took a bus back to Memphis.

Vacation was over for him.

When he came to Jimmy's office, Jimmy read him the Word of God. He came under conviction as he saw that he might have been in error. In deep humility, he asked God to convert him right on the spot!

God did just that!

They began immediately to pray that a reunion might be realized. Louis was convinced that his wife would never come home if she knew he was there. However, word reached her that he had changed his ways. She wrote that she was willing to give him another chance.

He met her, they embraced, and started immediate plans for a future together again. Those plans include time to allow Louis to work often in reaching men in the same position he was in with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

\* \* \*

So it has gone at the Memphis Mission.

There are hundreds of other experiences just as heart-warming as the ones you have read. Space will not permit them to be told here.

There was the football player in a Memphis high school, active in his church youth group, well thought of, popular. But, he didn't know Christ. One Saturday night at Youth for Christ he made that decision. A few months later at the Winona Lake Youth for Christ convention he dedicated his life to Christ. Then followed a year in a Christian college after which he went to New York to work in television.

Or Billy, from the Penal Farm. He was converted, then re-united with his family.

Or Martha, the young lady who either fell or jumped from a high building. She screamed constantly at the hospital. No one could stop her. Mrs. Blagg from the Mission was called. For thirty minutes she talked to her about her being sick, then asked her if she wanted to become a Christian. Her reply: No. But the Mission was still her friend as it saw to it that she was moved to a new home where under its direction she recuperated from a bad hip condition.

Or the Byards, known throughout the area as the "Hunger Bandits." The father left his family in the car at Rossville, Tennessee, while he went into Memphis to steal food and

money to keep the family alive. Judge Kelly turned them over to the Mission for rehabilitation work.

Or the mother who had only \$30.00 to bury her baby when she needed \$50.00. The Mission helped her make arrangements when they were informed that the little tot could be buried in the same grave as her husband who had died only a short time before.

Or the lady who needed \$50.00 to get her children out of an orphanage and into a home. Mrs. Pettit asked a businessman to help in that expense. He had her check the facts in the case, then gladly contributed \$50.00. Today the children are in Sunday school.

From the sanitarium came a letter from a young girl, thanking for the Bible sent to her by Youth for Christ. From a letter we see these words,

"I am happy to say that through the telephone ministry I have found my Christ. Thank you for your interest in me."

A man stood up in the testimony period at the chapel and said,

"One fellow had a big bottle of whiskey and kept offering me a drink. But I said NO! Thank God for victory!"

Or the girl who traveled with the devil's crowd and thought that Youth for Christ was a good joke. She went to her first meeting in that frame of mind. Later, she was converted at a rally and has dedicated her life to full-time Christian service.

Or the two sailor lads, roommates at Millington, who were so noticeably and gloriously saved at the Charles E. Fuller meetings on October 12, 1947.

But, not all are won.

One of the most likeable fellows around the Mission is Charley Jones. His weakness is liquor. He has told Jimmy that he is serving a life sentence at the Penal Farm, by installments. His praying, godly mother almost seems to sense when her son is off on another drinking spree. When



picked up by the police he soon writes to her from "the bug-house." He claims he has built most of the Penal Farm during the many sentences he has served there.

How long should the Mission seek to win Charley Jones to Christ?

There is no end to what the Mission will do to win him to Christ? Eternity anywhere will be a long time.

It will seem longer in hell.

But God has been tremendously good to the Memphis Union Mission in the ways in which He has allowed it to win men and women to Christ. The benches in front of the chapel where hundreds of men have knelt is holy ground. That chapel has seen and felt the true meaning of the word "transformation." Old things passed away. All things became new, because Jesus Christ died to save sinners along skid row.

But many other places are also hallowed ground because of the large outreach of the Mission. You have seen how the thirty different varieties of ministry have cast a soul-winning net all through the city and entire area.

Romans 10:13 tells us:

"For whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved."

That "whosoever" included a man of 29 who one day called to Jimmy from the shower room and wanted to get saved right there.

It includes the worst.

It includes the best.

It includes the in-between.

## THE PEOPLE SPEAK

GOD IS His own bookkeeper. What He thinks about what we do is all important. It is the standard against which all Christian work is to be judged. Success or failure in the service of Christ is determined by Him, not by human beings.

It is true that any analysis of Christian work being done can be influenced by our human reactions. Yet it is true that men whom God is using often are recognized by the world as doing a commendable piece of work.

Judge Kelly once said of the Mission,

"I heartily endorse the great movement which Mr. Stroud is carrying on in this city. He is putting drama and interest into goodness instead of badness. Youth all over the world are hungry for this wholesome bread of life. Except for a previous engagement, I would be riding with you in the parade today."

Methodist leader Bob Shuler wrote,

"The Memphis Union Mission is one of the finest and cleanest institutions of this kind I have ever visited. People of Memphis love Jimmy Stroud, believe in him, respect him and are standing by him. Best of all, God is standing by him."

Countless others have echoed the statement of Mrs. Billy Sunday that the Mission is one of the best in the world. Businessmen in Memphis appreciate the work of the Mission. City officials feel the same way. Jimmy has received much cooperation from churches and pastors. The solidity of his work is seen in that within nine months after he arrived in the city he was nominated by the Rotary club as the out-

standing young man of Memphis. He was given a special award by the sponsoring committee for the work he did.

The Mission clearly is performing a real civic and spiritual job in Memphis. It might well be pioneering a new age in Mission work by its emphasis on its many other avenues of ministry. There is no reason to believe that the number will stop at thirty. With completion of the youth auditorium, for example, many other services likely will be possible.

It is good to know, however, that the emphasis is not on the machinery but on the power behind the machinery—that power to change the hearts and lives of men and women, boys and girls. In this day of beautiful religious edifices and up-to-date, modern buildings, it often is too easy to get lost in the thrill of building and lose sight of the primary task of winning people to a faith in Jesus Christ. We feel assured that that will not happen in Memphis, mainly because the eyes of the workers are set on treasures in heaven, not here on earth.

Evangelist James McGinlay has described the Memphis Union Mission as “the twentieth century version of a rescue mission.” It may well be that.

But no matter what you call it, it stands today as a stopgap on skid row, picking out of the debris on life’s stream bewildered men and women who have floundered in sin and are being sucked into hell by its quicksand drawing power. You see those men in any city of any size across the entire country. Their eyes are not sharp. Their legs have lost their spring. Their ambition has been quenched. Their self-respect has vanished somewhere along the way as their backbones have bent beneath the inability to cope with life.

They are the men—and the women—on dead end street. Somewhere . . . someone is thinking of them. Each man is a pitiful example of what might have been had not sin moved in to take its deadly toll. Their wandering steps often seem

patternless. The hard bed in a jail is as much home to them as a cot in a flophouse.

Meandering men. Where they go, so few people know. So few people care. A siren wails. The ambulance stops outside a rickety, three-story frame building. Up the steps go two men with the stretcher, the intern at their heels. Through shadowy halls they move quickly as unshaven faces peer out of doors to see what is going on. In a little room, with newspapers covering the windows, they find another skid row soldier who has finished his rugged, weary course. Tomorrow he is buried. There is no one at the funeral. No one cares.

Just another man?

Just another man, in ragged clothes, scuffed up shoes, a safety pin doing the job of a button on a cold, snowy day?

Just another man, his eyes downcast, his step uncertain, his nerve broken but his stomach hungry as he stops you on the street and asks you for a dime for coffee and a doughnut?

Just another man?

No.

Not, just another man.

But a man in whom exists a human soul.

A man for whom Jesus Christ died on Calvary's cross.

A man who deserves as much as does the wealthy millionaire in a New York City penthouse the opportunity to know that Jesus Christ can save him from his sin.

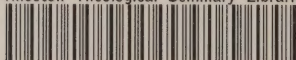
A man with a past of shame, a present of despair, but a future of hope . . . when Christ steps in.

For such men, the Memphis Union Mission exists as a sentinel on skid row, for Jesus' sake.





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